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COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION
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18-29 November 2002
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22,
PARAGRAPH 2(A) AND (B), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION**

**REVIEW OF REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION BY NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN, CENTRAL AND
EASTERN EUROPEAN AND OTHER AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES, INCLUDING ON THE
PARTICIPATORY PROCESS, AND ON EXPERIENCE GAINED AND RESULTS ACHIEVED
IN THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES**

Note by the secretariat

1. Pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Conference of the Parties (COP) shall review the implementation of the Convention and its institutional arrangements. By its decision 1/COP.5, the COP decided to establish a committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC) as a subsidiary body of the COP to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention, and to adopt the terms of reference of the CRIC as contained in the annex to that decision. The COP also decided that the first session of the CRIC should review updates to reports already available and/or new reports and that the review should focus on specific thematic topics.

2. In accordance with the same decision, the secretariat has prepared a synthesis and preliminary analysis of these reports, setting out the trends emerging in the implementation of the Convention. A synthesis and preliminary analysis of reports submitted by Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties are contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.1.

3. In accordance with decision 11/COP.1, the secretariat has compiled summaries of the reports. The summaries of reports from Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties are contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.2.

4. Decision 1/COP.5 also requests the secretariat to take advantage of its ongoing activities at the regional and/or subregional levels to disseminate information stemming from its preliminary analysis and seek to obtain feedback with a view to enriching the Committee's work base. The regional and subregional feedback, obtained at a meeting organized for Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties from 23 to 26 July 2002 in Geneva, Switzerland, is presented in ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.3.

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PARTICIPATORY PROCESS, AND ON EXPERIENCE GAINED AND RESULTS ACHIEVED
IN THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES**

**SYNTHESIS AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REPORTS
SUBMITTED BY NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN, CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN AND
OTHER AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES, AND PROGRESS MADE IN THE FORMULATION
AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES IN
THE NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN, CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND
OTHER AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES**

Note by the secretariat

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General introduction

1. In accordance with article 26, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), "each Party shall communicate to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its ordinary sessions, through the Permanent Secretariat, reports on the measures which it has taken for the implementation of the Convention".

2. In its decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation of the Convention, the Conference of the Parties (COP):

(a) Requests affected country Parties to provide a description of the strategies established pursuant to article 5 of the Convention and of any relevant information on their implementation;

(b) Requests affected country Parties implementing action programmes pursuant to articles 9 to 15 of the Convention to provide a detailed description of the programmes and their implementation, to keep reports as concise as possible in order to facilitate their review, and to structure reports according to the format and content laid down in the decision;

(c) Requests the Parties to submit their reports to the secretariat in one of the official languages of the Conference of the Parties at least six months prior to the session at which they are to be reviewed;

(d) Requests the secretariat to compile summaries of reports submitted and prepare, in addition, a synthesis of the reports setting out the trends emerging in the implementation of the Convention.

3. The UNCCD secretariat prepared, in collaboration with several United Nations agencies and subregional organizations, a Help Guide on the contents of decision 11/COP.1. The Help Guide was designed to provide a common format, practical recommendations and support for preparation of national reports (see ICCD/COP(3)/INF.3) by affected country Parties.

4. The first reporting exercise for Northern Mediterranean and other affected country Parties was conducted for review by the COP at its fourth session in December 2000, and by the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHGW), at its meeting in March/April 2001, in Bonn, Germany. The secretariat prepared a compilation and synthesis of the national reports submitted by Northern Mediterranean and other affected country Parties (ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.3(A) and Add.3(B)). The first synthesis report was based on five national reports received from Northern Mediterranean country Parties and five from Central and Eastern European country Parties.

5. At its fifth session in October 2001, the COP decided (decision 1/COP.5) to establish a committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC), as a subsidiary body of the Convention, to assist Parties in regularly reviewing implementation. The review following this decision is to take place at the first session of the CRIC in November 2002. Country Parties were asked to submit their reports for this review by 30 April 2002.

6. The secretariat adapted the Help Guide for preparation of the first set of national reports in 2000, to bring it into line with decisions 1/COP.5, 3/COP.5 and 10/COP.5. The updated Help Guide was sent to the country Parties in December 2001. Country Parties were requested to base their national reports on the seven key thematic topics set out in paragraph 10 of decision 1/COP.5. They are reproduced in full in the subsection headings of section C (entitled "Synthesis of information contained in reports") of Chapters I and II of Part One of the present document.

7. The secretariat sent two letters of reminder to the concerned country Parties. In these letters, dated 30 November 2001 and 15 March 2002, it requested the countries to submit their reports to the secretariat by 30 April 2002.

8. As of 22 May 2002, 17 national reports had been received from affected country Parties (seven from Northern Mediterranean, eight from Central and Eastern European affected country Parties, one from a country Party covered by both regions and one other affected country Party). The secretariat prepared a synthesis and preliminary analysis of these reports, which includes reports submitted by 22 May 2002.

9. The present document is divided into two parts: Part One contains the synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties. This part contains three chapters; the first contains the synthesis and preliminary analysis for Northern Mediterranean countries, the second for Central and Eastern European countries, and the third for others. The second part contains information on the progress made in the formulation and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes in Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties.

Part One

SYNTHESIS AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REPORTS
SUBMITTED BY NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN, CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN
AND OTHER AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES

I. SYNTHESIS AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REPORTS
SUBMITTED BY NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES

A. Introduction

10. Eight national reports have been received from affected country Parties from the Northern Mediterranean. Three countries in the Northern Mediterranean (Albania, Cyprus and Malta) submitted reports for the first time. Five countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Turkey) submitted updates of their first reports, originally submitted in 2000. Apart from two, all the reports arrived after the deadline. The reports generally followed the recommendations on the drafting of reports.

11. A synthesis of the reports submitted is presented in the following sections. Reports submitted after 22 May were not taken into account for this review. The full reports may be consulted on the web site of the UNCCD secretariat, at <http://www.unccd.int>. The compilation of reports received can be consulted in ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.2.

B. Overview of reports and emerging trends

12. Compared with the first reporting process, three more affected country Parties have reported. Out of eight reporting countries, three have formally adopted their national action programmes (NAP) during the last two years. The other countries are progressing in the NAP process at various speeds, with some still in the early stages and others close to adoption.

13. Countries from the Northern Mediterranean present very different political, environmental and socioeconomic features: some countries declare themselves as being affected, others do not; several are developed countries (including members of the European Union (EU)). The main problems the affected country Parties of the Northern Mediterranean have in common appear to be soil erosion, salinization of soil and groundwater, and loss of quality of topsoil. The reported causes of desertification vary between countries (water shortage, drought, deforestation, littoralization, forest fires, flooding etc.).

14. General progress and efforts in awareness raising are reported (local workshops, media campaigns etc.), but without a detailed description of the results. At a local level these actions are appreciated and popular, resulting sometimes in an ongoing consultative process. Compared with the previous reporting exercise, the continuity of the involvement of local stakeholders, regional actors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in national coordinating bodies (NCBs), is also noted. It was also stressed that awareness raising requires immediate follow-up by political and administrative authorities. Otherwise, the result could be a loss of

interest by stakeholders in further involvement. To overcome such difficulties, some countries have adopted the European Awareness Scenario Workshop (EASW) method developed by the Information Society Directorate-General of the European Commission. It has proved a successful tool for remobilizing local actors in the UNCCD process.

15. Combating desertification needs an inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach, especially at the political and administrative level (ministries, NCBS etc.). Communication and cooperation between actors at these levels are reported as being difficult to develop.

16. At a legislative level, each country highlighted the ongoing adaptation of national laws and directives to the evolving NAP process (formulation and implementation). In addition, most countries have taken EU directives into account when preparing their NAPs. Regarding synergies with environmental conventions and linkages with other environmental and socioeconomic plans (local Agenda 21, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)), countries reported progress but it needed to be strengthened further.

17. Reports make clear the challenge of mobilizing domestic funding for combating desertification, in particular for NAP implementation. External funding also seems to be an important factor for non-EU countries in starting implementation of the UNCCD, owing to inadequate national resources and the other priorities set by governments.

18. Northern Mediterranean countries report positive cooperation between policy-makers, the scientific community and local stakeholders. This cooperation concerns decision-making and planning of concrete measures. Cooperation with other affected country Parties, the European Commission and United Nations organizations was highlighted.

19. All reports illustrate scientific activities, including projects, pilot areas, pictures and maps. They contain scientific details of causes and effects of desertification at local level. Most reports also mention the good involvement of the scientific community in NAP preparation and implementation. Networking among scientific institutions and the exchange of data at the national and European levels are being further developed, supported in some cases by the European Commission.

C. Synthesis of information contained in reports

1. *Participatory process involving civil society, non-governmental and community-based organizations*

20. Most reports highlight the importance of the activities of civil society, NGOs and community-based organizations in the participatory process. Depending on the progress made by the country in implementing the Convention, several different kinds of activities are undertaken: awareness-raising campaigns, workshops, round table meetings and project-related field work. Some of these activities were linked to the celebration of the World Day to

Combat Desertification, others to the development of consultative mechanisms at local level.

21. In order to ensure participation and obtain feedback, countries sent documentation on NAP preparation and/or implementation (basic information, outline or full NAP document) to civil society actors, NGOs and community-based organizations. Little information was given on the outcome of these activities. Three reports from countries which are preparing NAPs explicitly named actors involved, such as farmers' representatives, agricultural associations or environmental NGOs. One report mentions the use of a questionnaire to evaluate the needs of local actors for preparation of the NAP. Efforts to include women and young people in consultations relating to the NAP are noted by one country implementing its NAP, and by two countries preparing their NAPs.

22. Most of the countries which have established a NCB indicated that representatives of NGOs and the scientific community are already members of their NCB. One country states that its future NCB will be composed mainly of government representatives.

23. The importance of early incorporation of desertification topics into the programmes of schools and universities, in order to build capacities and raise awareness, is highlighted in some reports.

2. Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements

24. Out of the eight affected countries which have submitted their reports, three are implementing their NAPs. The other countries are progressing at various speeds with the preparation of their NAPs: starting stage (beginning of awareness-raising campaigns and research activities), medium stage (NCB set up, increased research activities, organized participation of main stakeholders, draft NAP) and finalization or near-adoption of the NAP. All countries provide information on the content of these various stages. The synthesis therefore reflects the differences which can be found in the status of implementation of the Convention in Northern Mediterranean countries.

25. Most reports provide information on already established NCBs, or their planned structure. In terms of their legal and administrative status, the NCBs are either a part of ministerial bodies or are fully decentralized, using existing local bodies for coordination purposes. However, all the reports indicate that the NCB is less a legal entity, and more a "coordination mechanism". Countries with decentralized administrative and political structures stress the need for developing or strengthening local committees to combat desertification. The role of the latter will be to ensure NAP implementation at the local level.

26. All the reports underline the inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary character of the NCBs. This creates difficulties in the communication processes between actors, the identification of priorities and the decision-making processes. Ministries of agriculture, the environment and forests are well represented on NCBs. In turn, the NCBs are able to benefit from ministries' legal standing to pursue their goals. Other ministries are also

represented on NCBs, such as ministries of planning, finance or foreign affairs. All countries implementing their NAPs indicate that their NCBs include members of scientific institutions and universities (up to 50 per cent of NCB members) and representatives of local stakeholders (up to two NCB members).

27. The working methods of the NCBs are reflected in most reports, including information on the frequency of their regular meetings (once a month, and when the need arises). The arrangements concerning the presidency of NCBs vary from a fixed chairperson (designated by the minister of the concerned ministry) to an annually rotating chairmanship among the ministries involved.

28. There is a general consensus on the need to improve national legislative and institutional frameworks and to integrate desertification issues into them. In most of the countries there is no specific legislation focusing only on desertification, since this is covered by general environmental laws (e.g. laws to protect water resources, soil or forests) or ministerial plans (rural development etc.).

29. As part of NAP preparation, all countries have integrated, or are in the process of integrating, desertification issues into existing laws, directives, ministerial orders and plans. NAP implementation implies both continuous updating of these laws and, in some cases, drafting and adoption of new laws. Three reports from countries preparing NAPs and one from a country implementing its NAP provide a detailed list and summary of revised and new laws. The reports of EU member countries also noted the important role played by EU directives in adding value to the NAPs (e.g. the EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC). Some countries report that official guidelines on good practice in agriculture or water use have been drawn up for local actors and national institutions. Two countries preparing their NAPs have set up new government institutions (such as general directorates of rural planning; hydrology or meteorological services).

30. Three countries reported the formal adoption of their NAPs during the last two years. They note that their NAPs have no specific national legal framework. One NAP is published as a Common Ministerial Decision, which gives instructions and recommendations to all concerned institutions and governmental agencies at the national and local level.

*3. Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international,
including conclusions of partnership agreements*

31. Two main types of resources identified are: financial resources and human resources/capacity building, although most reports focus more on financial resources.

32. Countries stressed that at national level there were no independent budgets for the implementation of the Convention. Most financial resources come from the general budget of the ministries dealing with desertification (mainly ministries of the environment, of forestry or agriculture) or from

the budget of other ministries, local agencies and governmental organizations.

33. As far as external funding is concerned, three countries which are preparing NAPs indicate that their activities are mainly funded by international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Association for Energy Economics (IAEE). Most reports provide a detailed list of the projects and activities funded by these organizations. One country mentions the support and cooperation offered by other affected countries. The financial assistance granted by the European Commission is also highlighted by affected EU countries as essential support to activities in the forestry, agriculture and water resource management sectors in particular.

34. The need for funding is reported by most countries. Reports also outline difficulties experienced in mobilizing domestic funding to prepare and implement NAPs, owing to structural and political constraints. This slows the NAP implementation process, in particular activities relating to local capacity building, reforestation, and monitoring and assessment of desertification and drought. Two non-EU countries preparing a NAP underline the urgent need for external funding, as their governments can only provide inadequate or uncertain funding. Only one EU country reports a possible rise in funding from the responsible ministries to implement the NAP.

35. Efforts to mobilize local and national human resources are mentioned by all reports and are illustrated through various measures, such as local capacity-building seminars, training and exchange of scientific staff (on Geographic Information System (GIS), land use, etc.).

36. Domestic partnership agreements are common between universities, local agencies and NGOs, and between ministries concerned with the Convention, even if, in some cases, communication between them is reported as being difficult. Most reports draw attention to the intensive cooperation between the European Commission and EU members, and between the European Commission and the countries in accession. The following programmes are examples of such cooperation: Concerted Action to Support the Northern Mediterranean regional action programme to combat desertification (MEDRAP), Combating Desertification in Mediterranean Europe: Linking Science with Stakeholders (DESERTLINKS) and Policies for Land Use to Combat Desertification (MEDACTION). In addition partnership agreements have been formalized between five countries within the UNCCD Subregional Group of Annex IV countries. Finally, three countries mentioned cooperation with UNDP and UNEP in the general framework of the UNCCD.

4. Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies

37. Most reports indicate that UNCCD issues are integrated into the various national development and environment plans (e.g. forest, agriculture, spatial planning, water resource development, socioeconomic plans).

38. Linkages and synergies between the UNCCD and other environmental conventions and Agenda 21 are indicated by most reports. Turning those linkages and synergies to account in this context depends on countries' capacities and their level of progress towards implementation. Some reports mention their initial activities to implement the UNFCCC and the CBD. Others refer to activities conducted under local Agendas 21. The Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC is also referred to in one report. Finally, another report makes reference to European conventions, such as the European Landscape Convention, and to several European plans, such as the Blue Plan.

5. Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought

39. The rehabilitation of degraded land is addressed by most reports, in particular through reforestation, but also rehabilitation of irrigation systems and terraces, and rehabilitation of salinized land. Scientific descriptions of local land degradation and soil erosion are also provided by some reports. Most countries (EU members and others) report a lack of funding to apply rehabilitation measures. As a consequence of this lack of funding, one report indicates a serious slowdown in the implementation of reforestation measures. Most of this information on rehabilitation is provided without any indication as to the methodology used.

40. Early warning systems on soil erosion and drought are reported by three countries to be at the further development stage.

6. Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment

41. Some reports include information on measures to monitor and assess drought and desertification, as for example: a new meteorological data and observation network for monitoring climatic effects such as drought; a network of monitoring stations for soil erosion control. Several countries have already established their own national databases of information on monitoring desertification and drought and they are also participating in the setting up of a Mediterranean database.

42. All countries report that continuity of monitoring and assessment of drought and/or desertification depends on the availability of financial resources in the future. Use of, and training in GIS systems and remote sensing are mentioned by most reports. Identification and mapping at different scales, of national sensitive areas have been undertaken by national institutions, based on various factors such as soil parameters, erosion risk, vegetation cover or general desertification risk. Such activities have also been conducted at regional level in cooperation with

other affected countries from the Northern Mediterranean. In several reports the sensitive areas are detailed and illustrated by maps and pictures.

43. Four countries give an update on the preparation and use of desertification impact indicators. Some of these countries also refer to implementation indicators. Several countries have followed suggestions made at the fourth and fifth sessions of the COP for incorporating more socioeconomic indicators into their desertification risk scenarios. Most countries are also continuing their work on benchmarks and indicators.

44. Scientific organizations and specialized governmental institutions (such as national environmental agencies or regional hydrographic surveys) are in charge of activities relating to monitoring and assessment, and the identification and evaluation of benchmarks and indicators.

7. Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how

45. At national and local levels, the conditions of access to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how depend on the following factors: stage of implementation of the Convention, national scientific capacities and adequate financial resources. Several countries reported that they had identified and used traditional knowledge, such as traditional olive-tree growing techniques, protection of ancient terraces and rehabilitation of old irrigation systems.

46. Affected developed countries provided information on their scientific training programmes at national level and on their international technical cooperation on desertification. Some countries mentioned their participation in the Desertification Information System for the Mediterranean (DISMED) programme.

D. Lessons learned

1. Lessons from the national action programme formulation and implementation process

47. Countries implementing the Convention in the Northern Mediterranean are at different stages of the process, from starting preparation to implementing the NAP. Therefore, the lessons learned differ according to the stage reached. They relate mainly to communication among actors, the participatory process, evolution of the NCB and the funding approach. They can be summarized as follows:

(a) Communication and good will between all actors involved in preparing and implementing the NAP process are essential if it is not to slow down. This applies especially to the inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach at the administrative and political levels;

(b) Awareness-raising actions require immediate follow-up by political and administrative authorities. Otherwise, the result could be loss of interest by stakeholders in further involvement;

(c) Strengthening decentralized institutions is one way to ensure a real participatory process and the translation of national action to the local level. That would also facilitate the incorporation of local needs into the NAP process;

(d) The importance of early incorporation of desertification topics into school and university programmes in order to raise awareness and to build capacities, was also stressed;

(e) It was also stressed that the mandate and tasks of the NCBs need to be revised to bring them into line with the evolving NAP process. In addition, strong political support and commitment are required to enable NCBs to work more effectively;

(f) Countries which can mobilize their own funding, as well as countries that are mainly reliant on external funding, stressed that further implementation of the Convention (NAP implementation or issues relating to the Committee on Science and Technology (CST)) was facing a general lack of funding. In some cases, desertification is not perceived as a priority in the allocation of national budget.

2. Lessons from the reporting system

48. The main lesson to be drawn from the second reporting exercise is that the Help Guide should be brought into line with the decisions taken by the COP at its fifth session, to further facilitate the process for the country Parties. Account should be taken of the particular conditions of Northern Mediterranean countries, as defined in the regional implementation annex to the Convention (annex IV).

49. The format of the Help Guide could be readapted to the needs of the countries which have reached the implementation phase. In addition, the Help Guide should take into account the different forms of internal and external funding of Northern Mediterranean countries for implementing the Convention, so that they can provide the appropriate information.

E. Conclusions and recommendations

50. The most general conclusion that can be drawn from the eight reports received in this second reporting exercise, is that the UNCCD process has been gaining momentum throughout the Northern Mediterranean region. It is difficult to go beyond this assessment given the limited number of reporting countries and, in particular, the heterogeneity of their conditions. Furthermore, the present reporting format does not require the country Parties to emphasize analytical elements relating to this specific geographic area.

51. Judging from the reports received, many different types of activities are going on. Progress has been achieved, from the initial stage of the UNCCD process to the challenging phase of NAP implementation, which should increasingly influence land use planning. Each country goes at its own speed, taking into account various elements which all differ from one country

to another: socioeconomic context (EU members, countries in accession or in transition) and the particular institutional and legislative circumstances (old administrative framework or newly created governmental structures).

52. Despite large differences in the social, historical and political context of each country, the value of the participatory process is well recognized in all of them and its translation into action has been well adapted accordingly.

53. Northern Mediterranean countries present very heterogeneous economic conditions and capacities for channelling available and possible domestic and external funding for NAP preparation and implementation. This is apparent from the overview of information provided in the reports on the activities being launched.

54. The scientific involvement of Northern Mediterranean countries at national and regional level is strongly highlighted in this reporting process, as it was in the previous one. In Northern Mediterranean countries, desertification touches on a wide range of topics and concerns, which differ considerably from one country to another: from agriculture to drought; salinization to forest fires; loss of topsoil to deforestation, etc. Attention is also drawn to the role of the European Commission in the development of research and cooperation programmes on desertification.

55. This reporting process provides a good overview of the activities of the Northern Mediterranean countries relating to CST decisions, such as rehabilitation of degraded land; early warning systems for mitigating the effect of drought; drought and desertification monitoring and assessment; appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.

II. SYNTHESIS AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REPORTS SUBMITTED BY CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES

A. Introduction

56. By the end of May 2002, fifteen of the 22 countries of Central and Eastern Europe had become Parties to the UNCCD. Other countries from the region are in the process of accession. National reports have been received from the following nine affected country Parties: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, Republic of Moldova and Romania. Eight of them met the deadline set for submitting national reports (30 April 2002). Reports received after 22 May are not included in the synthesis.

57. The format and content of the reports were standardized in accordance with decisions 11/COP.1, 1/COP.5, 3/COP.5 and 10/COP.5, and with the updated Help Guide (ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.5).

58. A synthesis of the information contained in the reports is presented in the following section. A compilation of the summaries appears in ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.2. The full reports may be consulted on the web site of the UNCCD secretariat, at <http://www.unccd.int>.

B. Overview of reports and emerging trends

59. Out of nine affected reporting country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe six ratified or acceded to the Convention in the late 1990s and three in 2000-2001. Accordingly, individual country Parties are at different stages of the UNCCD process. Three country Parties have already prepared their NAPs and three others are in the process of preparation. Four country Parties have submitted reports for the first time. For five Parties this is the second UNCCD reporting exercise and most of them did not confine themselves to updating, but prepared full reports. Five country Parties, namely ex-Soviet republics, are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, while four other country Parties have been pursuing policies aimed at rapprochement with, or joining the EU. All these factors make the task of formulating common emerging trends in the region rather difficult.

60. As far as common features of the affected country Parties of the region are concerned, the following two appear to be especially important in the UNCCD context. Firstly, most of them are affected not so much by large-scale desertification, as by land degradation, drought and deforestation. Hence, country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe are interested first and foremost in prevention of land degradation, rehabilitation of degraded arable land and pastures, reforestation, forecasting and mitigating the effects of drought. They deem the UNCCD to be an appropriate instrument to address these concerns.

61. Secondly, most of the country Parties of the region belong to the group of transitional economies and have been undergoing a complex and painful process of radical socioeconomic transformation that includes democratization, decentralization, privatization, land reforms etc. In some cases, the situation in these countries is aggravated by political disturbances. Most country Parties of the region have experienced serious economic difficulties typical of the transition period (decline in production, unemployment, budget deficits and inflation), although in the recent years some definite signs of economic stabilization and/or recovery have been noted.

62. In the absence of adequate external financing, persisting economic difficulties are forcing some country Parties to redistribute their limited budget resources to the detriment of environmental protection, including the UNCCD process, in favour of urgent social needs, in particular, poverty reduction.

63. As noted in the first reporting exercise, Parties' commitment to the Convention and their efforts towards its implementation have been especially visible in the institutional and legislative fields, in organization of awareness campaigns and in facilitation of the participatory process for NAP preparation. However, the next stages of the UNCCD process, i.e. NAP implementation, require considerably more financial resources. Progress appears to be less evident and depends mainly on the degree of external support.

64. Some country Parties have started paying more attention to relatively small projects, of a pilot nature, rather than to big ambitious ones. Among other new developments, one notes the growing importance of economic mechanisms to stimulate land protection and rehabilitation (taxes, fines, ecological insurance, special funds etc.) and the increasing role of local budgets in combating land degradation. Finally, a growing part of financing for environmental protection is coming in some country Parties from sectoral budgets, mainly agriculture, forestry, water and irrigation, and energy. Some transboundary projects aimed at preventing land degradation are considered in the region to be cost-effective.

65. During the period between the first and second reporting exercises the role of NGOs in the UNCCD process has also undergone certain changes in a number of country Parties of the region. Thus, cooperation between governmental and non-governmental bodies engaged in the UNCCD process is becoming more direct and business-like. NGOs are more often asked by relevant governmental bodies to perform specific tasks, such as researching public opinion and public awareness of land degradation and desertification.

66. In most country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe women are better represented in NCBs and NGOs engaged in the UNCCD process than was the case some years ago. At the same time, it should be noted that traditionally, the degree of emancipation and education of women in the region is relatively high and the gender issue is not perceived as a serious problem.

67. All reporting countries of the region are Parties to a number of other environmental conventions, particularly UNFCCC, CBD and the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. In most cases, the NCBs for practically all the environmental conventions have been set up in the ministries in charge of environmental protection and natural resources. This facilitates coordination and the achievement of synergies.

68. The financial and technical assistance provided by international organizations and by bilateral partners is highly appreciated by the reporting country Parties of the region as a crucial factor for progress in the UNCCD process, taking into account their difficult economic situations. At the same time, it is generally understood that the next stage of implementing the Convention will require a substantial increase in external financial and technical support.

C. Synthesis of information contained in reports

1. Participatory process involving civil society, non-governmental and community-based organizations

69. All reports received from affected country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe confirm that in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, some specific policies and measures have been developed and implemented in order to stimulate the participatory process in combating land degradation and desertification.

70. Among such measures the reports mention organization at national and local level of seminars and workshops on land degradation and desertification, translation and distribution of UNCCD documents in local languages, preparation and free dissemination of locally adapted information materials, support to NGOs, awareness campaigns on the radio, on television and in the press.

71. Radical socioeconomic transformations, including democratization and decentralization, have, according to most reports, given considerable impetus to the participatory process. On the other hand, given the redistribution of rights and obligations at national and local levels in favour of the latter, it is essential that investments in education and training, down to the lowest level possible, i.e. to the final owner and/or user of a land parcel, are increased significantly. It is also stressed that decentralization and transition to the market economy should be supported by effective control systems at all levels in order to prevent over-exploitation of natural resources through ignorance or in the pursuit of profit.

72. Participating in the negotiations on, and becoming a Party to, the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters is considered by several country Parties a very important event. It opens new prospects for wider public involvement in the planning and implementation of countries' environmental policies, including policies to combat land degradation and desertification. It also generates synergies with other environmental conventions. For example, one country Party reported the setting up, after preliminary consultations with NGOs, of a public coordination council as a step towards improved coordination between the environment ministry and relevant NGOs.

73. Most country Parties noted that the role and activities of NGOs in environmental protection, including the UNCCD process, are continuing to grow and that cooperation between environmental NGOs and NCBs and other governmental bodies is improving further. The concrete forms of that cooperation are various and depend both on the specific situation and on the stage reached in the UNCCD process in each country. According to the reports by country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe, these forms may include: collecting information at local level, exploring public opinion, organizing meetings, involvement of women in the UNCCD process, particularly at local community level; organizing surveys on the natural, economic and social causes of desertification, and on degree of public awareness of environmental issues and the UNCCD process.

74. The key role of the mass media in popularizing UNCCD ideas was stressed in most reports, although one country Party noted that the scope of impact was limited by power failures in remote regions and the inability of locals to pay for relatively expensive newspapers. In more than one report the lack of financial resources was mentioned as one of the main reasons for limited utilization of modern electronic communication systems, particularly in remote regions.

2. Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements

75. According to all reports, the country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe recognize the need to include in their socioeconomic legislation specific legal and administrative provisions aimed at developing and implementing national programmes to protect the environment, including combating land degradation and desertification. Against this background, the concrete measures already taken or planned within the UNCCD process, vary widely depending on the particular political and socioeconomic situation in the country, and on the period between accession to the Convention and submission of the national report. It should be noted that for the reporting country Parties of the region this period ranged from several years to several months.

76. According to the reports, the institutional and legislative frameworks established before the first reporting exercise have been reformed and/or revised in several country Parties. New governmental bodies have been established and new laws introduced.

77. Thus, in one country Party, a permanent state commission on the implementation of the UNCCD has been established, consisting of representatives of relevant agencies and academic institutions. The national environmental action programme, which *inter alia* addresses the problems of combating desertification, has been adopted.

78. In another reporting country Party a new ministry of ecology and natural resources has been established which serves as the NCB for the UNCCD and other environmental conventions; three new laws were adopted relating to the UNCCD process, namely, the Environment Protection Law, the Ecological Security Law and the Law on Soil Fertility Preservation.

79. One country Party also reports that during the period between the two reporting exercises the former NCB for the UNCCD was replaced by a new body within the ministry of ecology, construction and land development, which is in charge of all ecological conventions. A series of new ecological documents highly relevant to combating desertification and land degradation was approved.

80. The establishment of new institutions and elaboration of new environmental laws to replace or revise the ones which existed at the beginning of the transitional period, is also typical of other country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe.

81. Three country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe reported that within their general policy orientation towards rapprochement with the EU, they anticipate having to make certain changes to their ecological, legislative and institutional frameworks to make them compatible with EU standards and practices.

*3. Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international,
including conclusions of partnership agreements*

82. All reports from Central and Eastern Europe emphasize the decisive role of adequate financing for the successful launching, developing and implementing of action under the UNCCD. At the same time, all country Parties report that, owing to severe budgetary difficulties, they have had to allocate limited resources to meeting the population's immediate basic needs (food, energy, etc.) at the expense of some less urgent priorities, including combating land degradation and desertification. That happens mainly at the budget planning stage, although sometimes resources initially allocated to environmental protection are diverted for other purposes, such as social spending.

83. In some cases, budget financing is inadequate not only for the relatively expensive elements of the NAPs, but also for much smaller items, e.g. improving communication systems, translation, acquisition of technical literature, etc.

84. As an important new development several reports mentioned the growing interest in small pilot projects and in economic mechanisms and measures (fines for pollution, special funds, ecological taxes, ecological insurance, soft bank credits and subsidies for farmers). One relatively new country Party reported that setting up and implementing economic and financial mechanisms to stimulate rational use and conservation of land resources had been identified as a priority task under its future NAP.

85. Most country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe reported that external financing had been, and would continue to be, a crucial factor for progress in implementing the UNCCD, and for progress in the broader area of environmental protection which impacts on the UNCCD process. They urge development partners to increase their financial assistance to facilitate implementation of their NAPs. Some reports mention special priority projects and areas of cooperation where external financing is particularly needed. Those cooperation areas range from training of experts, awareness raising, supply of equipment for databases and information systems, to the implementation of concrete projects aiming at combating land degradation and desertification.

*4. Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and,
as appropriate, with national development strategies*

86. All reporting countries of Central and Eastern Europe are Parties to several environmental conventions. Most reports indicate that the UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD are very closely interlinked and that it is among those conventions that synergies should be sought in the first place.

87. As noted in a number of reports, institutional measures already taken by Parties to implement these conventions facilitate the coordination of activities in all three areas. Indeed, in most country Parties it is the environment ministries that have been appointed as the NCBs for all three conventions. Nevertheless, some country Parties consider that coordination

of work on these three conventions can be improved. Accordingly, in those country Parties, coordination of activities under the United Nations environmental conventions has been identified as a priority action under the NAPs in order to achieve increasing synergies.

88. One country Party points out that a number of environmental conventions could use the same indicators, e.g. climatic, pedological, hydric, agricultural, forestry, biological, demographic etc. All reporting country Parties emphasize the need to integrate action programmes on environmental conventions and national development strategies, in particular in such areas as poverty reduction, science and education, agriculture, forestry, energy and water supply.

89. Some country Parties report on specific projects which could serve as examples of efficient coordination to avoid duplication and to maximize synergies. Thus, in one country a project on self-assessment of national capacity needs addresses all three environmental conventions and attempts to develop principles of complex management of environmental protection. In another country, a project on the ecological rehabilitation of degraded peat lands should result not only in the rehabilitation of land but also in a decrease of greenhouse gas emissions, restoration of the fertile organic layer and conservation of biological and landscape diversity.

90. All reports recognize the particular importance of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

5. Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought

91. Some reports from Central and Eastern Europe contain fairly limited information on this subject, and some do not deal with it at all. One Party has approved a complex national programme of soil fertility improvement and established a database on soil quality. The main objective of its NAP is the preservation of soil fertility in areas affected by desertification by using ecological methods of soil utilization that are socially acceptable and economically feasible. Another objective of the NAP is protection of insignificantly degraded land and/or its conservation in order to achieve its natural rehabilitation.

92. Some country Parties point out that, to a considerable degree, rehabilitation of degraded land is taking place through sectoral policies, especially in such areas as forestry and irrigation. One country Party reports on a project for the reforestation of 7,000 ha of eroded soils and moving sands. This project is partly financed under the Kyoto Protocol with the Prototype Carbon Fund administered by the World Bank.

93. The country Parties have not provided any information on early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought. One country Party, however, mentioned the importance of drought forecasting in the preparation of integrated water resource use programmes. Another country Party noted that a number of actions taken so far by governmental and non-governmental

organizations to mitigate the adverse effects of drought had been, for the most part, sporadic and inadequately coordinated. Many of them have been reactive rather than preventive in nature. In the view of that country Party, action taken towards mitigating the effects of drought should shift from the crisis-management to the risk-management type.

6. Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment

94. Most country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe recognize in their reports the importance of drought and desertification monitoring, but provide rather sketchy information. One country Party lists various indicators which should be used for monitoring zones affected by desertification and drought, and for monitoring degraded soils affected by water erosion, land slides, wind erosion, salinization and pollution. In that country, the existing agricultural soil and forestry monitoring network may be used as a basis for monitoring desertification, drought and land degradation.

95. In the NAP of one country Party, elaboration of new methods of ecological monitoring is singled out as one of the priority areas for scientific and technical activities to combat desertification. Special attention is also being paid to the problems of ecological modelling, analysis and forecasting desertification processes.

96. In another reporting country Party the recently established National Monitoring Body of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources has begun setting up a unified system of monitoring the environment, including desertification.

7. Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how

97. Most country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe report that they attach great importance to the scientific and technical support provided under the UNCCD process by various national institutions, such as academies of science, universities, and specialized scientific and research institutions. In one country national institutions are involved in scientific research on 34 different problems relevant to desertification. This research is financed mainly by the State, which also plays an important role in strengthening national scientific centres and procuring modern technologies.

98. Among various activities aimed at securing access to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how, some Parties mention transfer of technology programmes; formulating plans for requests for technical cooperation; establishing high quality counselling service for land protection, irrigation techniques, utilization of fertilizers and for improvement of land productivity. Two reports emphasize the role of the traditional knowledge and working methods of local people in combating land degradation and desertification.

99. According to most reports, the major obstacle to access to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how appears to be an acute or chronic shortage of financial resources.

D. Lessons learned

1. Lessons from the national action programme formulation and implementation process

100. It follows from all the reports from Central and Eastern Europe that even at the formulation stage, NAPs should become an integral part of a country's long-term socioeconomic strategies and overall national environmental protection and sustainable development programmes. Most country Parties of the region also consider it crucial to ensure interlinkage between the NAP and relevant sectoral programmes, particularly in such areas as agriculture, forestry, water and irrigation, and energy.

101. As regards the implementation process, it is rather difficult to draw lessons and conclusions since at present only three country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe have adopted their NAPs. Nevertheless, even the limited experience of three countries shows that the main obstacle to success is an acute or chronic shortage of financial resources, both at national level and on the part of foreign development partners. In the absence of adequate financing, most countries have started experimenting with smaller projects of a pilot nature. However, such projects cannot replace the large-scale activities envisaged by the NAPS, which require the conclusion of partnership agreements.

102. As noted by most reporting country Parties, there is a need, at the implementation stage, to secure efficient coordination of national activities on all main environmental conventions in order to avoid duplication and maximize synergies.

103. Another important lesson is the need to adjust previously established institutional and legislative frameworks in line with new trends in socioeconomic development and international cooperation in Europe.

2. Lessons from the reporting system

104. The main lesson to be drawn from the second reporting exercise is the need to further assist country Parties from Central and Eastern Europe, for example by bringing the Help Guide into line with decisions taken by the COP at its fifth session, taking into account the particular conditions of these countries, as defined in Annex V to the Convention.

E. Conclusions and recommendations

105. The most general conclusion which can be drawn from the reports is that the UNCCD process has been gaining momentum in the Central and Eastern European region. In spite of economic difficulties, most affected country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe have demonstrated growing interest in the UNCCD process. Indeed, the number of country Parties to the Convention

has increased from one in 1997 and six at the beginning of 2000 to fifteen at the end of May 2002. Judging from the reports received, progress has been achieved at the initial stage of the UNCCD process, particularly with regard to institutional and legislative frameworks, and public awareness raising.

106. The serious economic difficulties experienced by most country Parties of the region are limiting the resources which could be allocated to the protection of the environment, including combating land degradation and desertification. External financial and technical assistance appears to be below expectations. Therefore, at present, inadequacy of resources is the main obstacle to achieving further progress in the UNCCD process in Central and Eastern European affected countries.

107. One particular feature of the region is the special importance affected country Parties attach to UNCCD provisions to combat land degradation, protect top soil and mitigate the effects of drought, while desertification problems appear to be less acute.

108. There are some noteworthy new approaches reported by many country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe, such as the wider utilization of economic mechanisms, preparation and implementation of pilot projects, establishment of local funds and development of transboundary cooperation.

109. In most reports, the degree of compliance with the agreed structure for national reports was particularly low for science and technology issues. Not one report referred to the most recent decisions of the Committee on Science and Technology, and only one country Party mentioned the roster of independent experts.

III. SYNTHESIS AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REPORTS SUBMITTED BY OTHER AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES

110. At the date of finalization of this document only one report had been received in this country category and therefore a synthesis is not called for.

Part Two

PROGRESS MADE IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUBREGIONAL
AND REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES IN THE NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN
AND IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

**I. PROGRESS MADE IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUBREGIONAL
AND REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES IN NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN
AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES**

A. Introduction and background

111. In accordance with decision 4/COP.3, the group of Annex IV countries submitted a regional report on their activities to the fourth session of the COP. This report, contained in ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.3(B), was reviewed by the Ad Hoc Working Group in April 2001, in Bonn, Germany.

112. The group of Annex IV countries is composed of the first five affected countries to have ratified the Convention. With no other affected country in the region being a Party to the Convention at the time of the group's creation in 1995, everything relating to the activities of this group has been called "regional".

113. The process of ratification and accession by Northern Mediterranean countries has been spread over the last six years and is still going on. Thus, the number of new Northern Mediterranean affected country Parties has steadily increased, from five in 1998 to ten in 2001. For this reason, the above-mentioned group of Annex IV countries, covering only five countries, decided in June 2001 to adopt a new designation in order to take account of this development in the Northern Mediterranean region. Therefore their activities are now designated "subregional" and no longer "regional": the group of Annex IV countries is to become a "subgroup of the annex IV" preparing a subregional action programme (SRAP).

B. Progress made in the subregional action programme

114. At the last reporting process, for the fourth session of the COP in 2000, the presidency of the above-mentioned group of Annex IV countries had presented a report highlighting the finalization and adoption of the terms of reference of their regional action programme. This report, contained in ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.3(B), also provided information on regional activities conducted since 1995 by successive group presidencies.

115. For the present reporting process, the new presidency has presented an update of the activities of the group since its last report. The full document is accessible on the UNCCD web site, <http://www.unccd.int>, under "Regional information". Based on that report, an outline of the main progress made is set out below.

116. On the occasion of its first meeting under the new presidency, in Athens, Greece, in June 2001, the group decided to change the designation of the "regional action programme" to "subregional action programme". A focal

point meeting of the subgroup of Annex IV countries was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on the occasion of the fifth session of the COP. No progress was reported in the implementation of the terms of reference of the SRAP. Members of the subgroup participated in various meetings of several scientific regional and interregional programmes and projects, such as MEDRAP (European Commission funding) and DISMED. They also presented a project for funding to the European Commission, the Clearing House Mechanism on Desertification for the Northern Mediterranean region (CLEMDES), which was approved.

II. PROGRESS MADE IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES

A. Introduction and background

117. Further to the request by some countries from Central and Eastern Europe, a new regional implementation annex to the UNCCD for Central and Eastern Europe (Annex V) was prepared and adopted by the fourth session of the COP, in 2000 (decision 7/COP.4). Annex V entered into force on 6 September 2001.

118. Annex V takes into account the particular conditions of the Central and Eastern European region, which apply in varying degrees to the affected countries of the region. They include specific problems and challenges relating to the current process of economic transition, the variety of forms of land degradation in the different ecosystems of the region, crisis conditions in agriculture, unsustainable exploitation of water resources leading to chemical pollution, salinization and exhaustion of aquifers, forest coverage losses, the use of unsustainable development practices in affected areas, and the risk of growing economic hardship and deteriorating social conditions in areas affected by land degradation, desertification and drought.

119. Annex V offers to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe concrete opportunities for strengthening scientific and technical cooperation, and for promoting the development, adaptation and transfer of relevant existing and new environmentally sound technologies within and outside the region. Such cooperation may be developed through the preparation and implementation of regional and/or joint action programmes.

B. Progress of regional cooperation

120. Since early 2000 the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been showing an interest in the UNCCD implementation process at national and regional levels. The consultative process on ways and means of initiating regional cooperation on combating land degradation in Central and Eastern Europe in the context of the UNCCD was started at the Workshop on Land Degradation/Desertification in Central and Eastern Europe, held in Brussels, Belgium, in May 2000, with financial assistance from the EU and the governments of Germany and Finland.

121. In order to give effect to the implementation of Annex V, and pursuant to the provisions of article 8 of the same Annex, the UNCCD secretariat facilitated the convening, in September 2001, in Prague, Czech Republic, of a consultative meeting to prepare implementation of the UNCCD in Central and Eastern Europe. Participants at the meeting emphasized the urgency of measures that need to be taken under the UNCCD, notably in the light of climate change and of the prolonged drought that was having severe consequences for many countries of the region. They requested the UNCCD secretariat, *inter alia*, to facilitate the establishment of partnership mechanisms for NAP implementation and to start the process of preparing a framework document for cooperation under Annex V.

Annex I

LIST OF COUNTRY PARTIES WHOSE REPORTS WERE INCLUDED
IN THE SYNTHESIS (27 May 2002)

Albania *
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus *
Bulgaria *
Cyprus *
Georgia
Greece
Hungary *
Israel
Italy (summary)
Malta *
Portugal
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Spain
Turkey

* new reports

Annex II

STATUS OF NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES IN THE NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN
AND CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (27 May 2002)

1. Countries in the phase of NAP preparation

Albania
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Bulgaria
Cyprus
Georgia
Hungary
Israel
Malta
Spain
Turkey

2. Countries in the NAP implementation phase

Armenia
Greece
Italy
Republic of Moldova
Portugal
Romania

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**Convention to Combat
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COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION
First session
18 - 29 November 2002
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22,
PARAGRAPH 2(A) AND (B), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION**

**REVIEW OF REPORTS BY DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES ON MEASURES TAKEN TO ASSIST IN
THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES OF AFFECTED COUNTRY
PARTIES OF ALL REGIONS, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON FINANCIAL RESOURCES THEY
HAVE PROVIDED, OR ARE PROVIDING, UNDER THE CONVENTION**

Note by the secretariat

1. Pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Conference of the Parties (COP) shall review the implementation of the Convention and its institutional arrangements. By its decision 1/COP.5, the COP decided to establish a committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC) as a subsidiary body of the COP to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention, and to adopt the terms of reference of the CRIC as contained in the annex to that decision. The COP also decided that the first session of the CRIC should review updates to reports already available and/or new reports and that the review should focus on specific thematic topics.
2. According to decision 11/COP.1, developed country Parties are asked to report on measures taken to assist the preparation and implementation of action programmes of affected country Parties of all regions, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention. A synthesis and preliminary analysis of these reports, prepared by the secretariat in accordance with decision 1/COP.5, are contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/6/Add.1.
3. In accordance with decision 11/COP.1, the secretariat has compiled summaries of the reports. The summaries of reports from developed country Parties are contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/6/Add.2.

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**COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION
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First session

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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION,
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22, PARAGRAPHS 2 (a) AND (b),
AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION**

**Review of reports by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist
in the preparation and implementation of action programmes of affected
country Parties of all regions, including information on financial resources
they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention**

Synthesis and preliminary analysis of reports from developed country Parties

Note by the secretariat

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Introduction

1. Pursuant to article 26, paragraph 5, of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, in particular decision 11/COP.1, developed country Parties shall report, through the secretariat, on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention.
2. In decision 11/COP.1, on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, the Conference of the Parties:
 - (a) Requested developed country Parties to report on measures taken to support the preparation and implementation of action programmes, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention;
 - (b) Requested Parties to submit their reports to the secretariat at least six months prior to the session at which they were to be reviewed;
 - (c) Requested the secretariat to compile the summaries of reports submitted.
3. The format and content of these reports are specified in paragraph 10 (c) of decision 11/COP.1.
4. The developed country Parties prepared reports on Africa, which they submitted in 1999 at the third session of the Conference of the Parties, in Recife, Brazil. In line with the recommendations of an informal meeting held by the developed country Parties in Recife on the issue of the preparation of their reports, the secretariat prepared a note to assist countries in drawing up their future reports on Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as on the northern Mediterranean and other affected countries, for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth session, held in Bonn, Germany, in 2000.
5. In its decision 1/COP.5, the Conference of the Parties established a committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention, which, pursuant to the same decision, was to meet from 18 to 29 November 2002 to review reports from all regions. In addition, in the same decision, the Conference of the Parties decided that the committee, at its first session, would review updates to reports already available and new reports from all Parties, to be submitted to the secretariat no later than 30 April 2002.
6. Pursuant to decision 10/COP.4, Parties were encouraged to include information in their national reports on scientific and technical activities to combat desertification and on progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Science and Technology.

I. REPORTS RECEIVED FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

7. On 6 December 2001, the secretariat wrote to developed country Parties, requesting them to submit their reports by 30 April 2002; a reminder was sent on 4 March 2002. As of 22 May 2002, the secretariat had received the following 15 final reports and 2 preliminary drafts on which the present synthesis has been based: Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland. Most of these reports were updates to previous reports on Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the other affected country Parties. Three countries were submitting reports for the first time: Czech Republic, Ireland and Monaco. Other reports which reached the secretariat after 22 May 2002 have not been incorporated in the present synthesis, but they are available on the secretariat's web site, <http://www.unccd.int>. A compilation of the summaries of the reports is contained in document ICCD/CRIC(1)/6/Add.2.

8. The secretariat sent a note to developed country Parties at the same time as its first letter, recommending the following format for the reports: they should include four sections, on Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Central and Eastern Europe, each section (as set out in decision 11/COP.1) comprising a summary, a section on the consultative process and partnership agreements and a section on measures taken to support the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, both bilaterally and multilaterally. The secretariat also recommended a final section on any other activities relevant to desertification control.

9. The approach taken in the present document is as follows: chapter II, a synthesis of the 17 reports received, is structured in accordance with the secretariat's recommendations on the drafting of reports; chapter III covers general trends in the implementation of the Convention, highlighting the main thrusts of the reports; and the fourth and last chapter, "Conclusions and recommendations", covers the main strategic areas, as well as issues relevant to the Committee on Science and Technology mentioned in the reports received. Section C of chapter IV endeavours to identify links and synergies with other conventions and with national development strategies, measures to restore degraded land and to set in place early warning systems so as to mitigate the effects of drought, and measures relating to the monitoring and evaluation of drought and desertification and access by affected country Parties to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.

II. SYNTHESIS OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

A. Africa

10. Of the 17 reports received, 16 cover implementation of the Convention in Africa.

1. Consultative processes and partnership agreements

11. Most of the reports express support for actions to promote consultative processes, including the involvement of local populations and their organizations at all stages of the decision-making process. All the reports support efforts geared towards the empowerment of civil society and its various constituent elements. These generally take the form of training courses and the transfer of knowledge or know-how and also include support for the establishment of women's groups and associations of farmers and livestock-breeders. Efforts to control desertification must form part of broader development and poverty alleviation programmes. One recurrent theme is that of decentralization, namely, reducing the role of the State and increasing that of local organizations and the private sector; a number of reports give particular attention to projects fostering better organization at the local level. Another widely covered issue is the use of local development activities to raise public awareness of desertification and the Convention.

12. Beyond such general statements, not much detail is provided about specific measures taken to support consultative processes and partnership agreements directly related to implementation of the Convention. These measures almost invariably take the form of support for local development activities, in such areas as rural development, forests and water resources, erosion control, and rangeland improvement. Three reports focus on the need for subregional cooperation, given the transboundary nature of desertification and of certain resources such as water. All the reports show that a considerable number of the activities to support consultative processes are conducted by non-governmental organizations; these activities, as well as the partnership agreements, are generally monitored by embassies. There is little mention of support for partnership agreements specifically related to the Convention.

13. In addition, almost all the reports mention, as part of the country's support for participatory processes and for partnership agreements, its involvement with various multilateral organizations, including those of the United Nations. The World Bank, the regional development banks, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) are widely mentioned. Certain reports even specify the country's obligatory contribution to these bodies, as well as its voluntary contribution, but without stating how much is allocated for desertification. Mention is also made of partnership agreements with the centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), in particular, those specializing in tropical and arid zones, such as the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). One developed country records its support for the 2001 Asia-Africa Forum, on participatory processes. A number of countries mention their support for African regional and subregional organizations, such as the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS).

2. Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, bilaterally and multilaterally

14. The reports show little evidence of measures taken to assist in the preparation of national, subregional and regional action programmes; they note that these activities have already been covered in previous reports. Generally speaking, the reports make little mention of national action programmes: they almost all point out that support measures in this area are triggered by requests and that not many such requests have been made. Most reports cite national action programmes as a priority but show little support earmarked for such programmes. We might note, however, that three developed country Parties are lead countries for four African countries; local conditions prevent one of them from developing a national action programme. Two countries mention their indirect support for five African countries and two others note the support that they provide for national and subregional action programmes through OSS. One country states that it is supporting a subregional action programme in southern Africa through the Global Mechanism. The developed countries point out that national action programmes should form part of national development and poverty-alleviation strategies. Three reports also stress that the desertification control strategy should be coordinated with strategies to protect biological diversity; they specifically refer to actions related to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The developed country Parties' also record their involvement in activities by various multilateral organizations, including those of the United Nations, related to the preparation of national action programmes, such as the UNDP Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO). As for support for the implementation of national action programmes, it is hard to identify, among all the activities in support of development activities, which relate directly to national action programmes and which relate to other programmes or plans.

15. Almost all the reports provide information on financial resources made available in 2001. It is extremely difficult, however, to identify which data, among all the data provided, relate specifically to each of the various activities, usually because the amounts cited are consolidated annual totals. More often than not, the information relates to specific, one-off operations which are not directly related to implementation of the Convention but form part of other desertification control activities. In addition, several reports cite amounts allocated to the Convention secretariat, for the participation of developing country representatives in regional meetings organized under the Convention and meetings of the Conference of the Parties and of the Global Mechanism. Financial resources provided in support of Africa can be grouped in several categories: first, institutional support, to strengthen existing regional and national bodies; second, support to non-governmental organizations; third, support for scientific activities; and, fourth, support for other general activities. Some of the reports contain almost no financial information. One report summarizes all the support provided since the accession of the country concerned to the Convention. Finally, some countries also give information on their contribution to multilateral organizations, as already mentioned in subsection 1 above.

16. In conclusion, most reports cite domestic efforts by the developed country Parties in support of their own national organizations, both public and private, engaged in cooperation with affected country Parties. These efforts include both scientific and technical activities in such

areas as erosion control, land rehabilitation, irrigation, improving livestock and crop farming practices, geographic information systems, remote sensing, the development of desertification indicators and follow-up and evaluation methods. They are also designed to support organizations offering training, such as universities or specialized centres. Finally, support is also provided to national non-governmental organizations working in partnership with the non-governmental organizations of affected country Parties, but the information supplied on this matter is very uneven (citing total amounts of funding, very detailed lists, etc.).

3. Other activities relevant to desertification control

17. All the reports give information on bilateral activities to support drought and desertification control operations. These include measures to restore degraded land, and, in particular, soil and water conservation measures, the sustainable management of resources, measures to improve crop farming and livestock-breeding, forestry and production systems and support for scientific research in these areas. Also included are measures to promote participatory approaches and to strengthen civil society, mentioned in the subsection on participatory processes; measures to support decentralization and institutional reforms, including the privatization of various sectors; and measures to strengthen national and local capacities, education and training. All the reports emphasize the integrated nature of these activities and their links with poverty alleviation. Most reports describe the arrangements for their bilateral cooperation and its goals: some provide tables of their activities in Africa, setting out the various operations in different countries, while others provide information of a more reflective and strategic nature on the methodology of their cooperation. Some reports contain little information about their specific activities. Finally, some reports note their support for specialized African regional organizations, such as the Regional Training Centre for Agro-meteorology and Operational Hydrology and their Applications (AGRHYMET), the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) and the OSS multi-country programmes which include work on drought and groundwater resource-monitoring methods.

18. We might note here certain areas of activity which are common to all the reports. Efforts to improve water resources management are cited in virtually all reports as a top priority: these include the identification of resources, including groundwater resources, irrigation methods and activities to promote the combined management of soil and water resources in catchment areas. Efforts to improve forest management and stock raising practices are also widely covered. It appears from the reports that local and integrated rural development is the area with the most activities and which receives the largest amount of funding. Another important priority is training, either at university level, in the form of short or medium-term courses at the universities of developed country Parties, or through short-term, on-the-job training courses. Four reports describe efforts to identify synergies between the three conventions and certain projects linking these three conventions, including in the areas of agroecology and carbon sequestration.

B. Asia

19. Thirteen of the 17 reports mention implementation of the Convention in Asia.

1. Consultative approaches and partnership agreements

20. Most of the reports express support for consultative processes and partnership agreements. As described in the reports, there is no difference in approach between the policies in support of Africa and those in support of Asia. The latter are essentially designed to promote stakeholder involvement in the formulation of desertification policies, projects and programmes and to support the organization of seminars, working groups and information and other networks on the Convention and desertification control. They are also designed to support the activities of local associations of crop farmers and livestock breeders, women's groups and other bodies to promote integrated local development. The final goal is to ensure decentralization by strengthening civil society, on the one hand, and by gathering traditional knowledge and promoting access to know-how, awareness-raising and training, on the other.

21. As mentioned in the section on Africa, developed country Parties are also involved through multilateral organizations, including those of the United Nations system, such as UNDP, the economic and social commissions for western Asia (ESCWA) and for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. In addition, their activities are also conducted through the CGIAR international agricultural research institutes, such as ICARDA and ICRISAT. Some countries mention their support for subregional partnership agreements, such as those in the Pacific islands, central Asia and western Asia. Finally, a large number of activities forming part of the consultative processes are carried out by non-governmental organizations. Some countries list the non-governmental organizations which they support, while others merely mention their support for the non-governmental organizations of both developed countries and affected countries, without distinguishing between them.

2. Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, bilaterally and multilaterally

22. There is very little coverage in the reports of support specifically intended for the preparation and implementation of national and subregional action programmes. One country draws attention to its support for the coordination of national focal points through the organization of an Asian ministerial conference and the Asia-Africa Forum, referred to in the section on Africa. Another country provided support for an affected country in its efforts to incorporate desertification control into a national development strategy, through the Global Mechanism. Some reports also mention support for efforts by affected countries to update their national action programmes. Two countries are providing support for subregional efforts in central Asia to set up a subregional action programme and in western Asia for national action programmes in that area and for a subregional action programme.

23. The reports contain a wide range of information on the financial resources provided by developed countries. These resources are allocated for various purposes: thus, support is provided for the drafting of the national reports required under the Convention and for participation in the Convention's subregional meetings and in its various bodies, and funds are also allocated for a number of development, training, scientific and technical research and information-related projects.

24. Most countries refer to their domestic efforts related to the organization and coordination of desertification control and the priorities for their activities. They specify the main bodies involved, both public and private. These are generally scientific and university institutions working on such issues as desertification monitoring, improving erosion control methods, water resource management, geographic information systems and remote sensing.

3. Other activities relevant to desertification control

25. Mention is made in the developed country reports of a large number of rural development projects which are also related to desertification control and the environment in general: these are to be found in the affected countries of western Asia; in countries of southern and south-eastern Asia; and in the countries of mainland and central Asia. These projects fall into two categories: the first covers very technical projects which pursue specific goals, such as enhancing awareness and management of water resources, particularly in the arid countries of the Asian region; desertification monitoring; the use of specific methods and good agricultural practices to control erosion, such as in the loess plateau in China; protection of the plant cover; forestry and agroforestry. The second category covers the organization of civil society and participation by the public in decision-making relevant to desertification control and development. Some projects have a subregional dimension, such as the development projects in the Mekong Basin countries or those to improve water-use practices in the countries of central and western Asia.

C. Latin America and the Caribbean

26. Eight of the 17 countries report on implementation of the Convention in Latin America and the Caribbean.

1. Consultative processes and partnership agreements

27. The sections on Latin America and the Caribbean in the reports contain much the same policy statements regarding support for participatory processes and partnership agreements as the sections on Africa and Asia. That said, very few countries mention any support for consultative processes and partnership agreements. Those reports which do cover the subject refer to efforts undertaken with the support of three countries to strengthen cooperation in the Caribbean subregion as part of the implementation of the Convention. Three countries refer to a number of activities to raise awareness of desertification and of the Convention; these activities are conducted by non-governmental organizations with support from the embassies of developed countries. One country is engaged in coordination efforts among the Andean countries.

2. Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, bilaterally and multilaterally

28. The reports do not mention any direct support for the preparation and implementation of national and subregional action programmes, except for one new national action programme in the Caribbean. One developed country records its indirect support for this

procedure in two affected countries, by recommending the integration of such programmes in the environmental policies of these countries and their coordination with plans developed under two other environmental conventions.

29. Not much information is provided on the financial resources allocated to Latin America and the Caribbean. As with the other Convention regions, these efforts are divided between institutional support for the Convention (drafting of reports, participation in meetings of Convention bodies), support for numerous development and desertification control projects, for training activities and for civil society empowerment; finally, reference is also made to support for scientific research, in both developed and affected countries.

3. Other activities relevant to desertification control

30. The reports received refer to a wide range of support for development activities and activities to combat desertification and land degradation in virtually all countries of the region. Attention is also drawn to numerous regional coordination activities: these include measures to develop the mountainous regions of the Andean countries and coordination activities in such areas as Central America, relating to methodological aspects and meteorological systems supported by the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The projects fall into two categories: the first includes highly technical projects focusing on rural development, development of catchment areas, erosion control measures, management of water resources, forest protection and forest management efforts, and agroforestry; one of these very technical projects looks at the links between aspects of desertification control and climate change, such as carbon sequestration. The second category includes decentralization projects and projects to strengthen the role of civil society and to promote the use of appropriate technologies. Mention is also made of efforts relating to scientific research, at such CGIAR international research institutions as the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and the International Potato Centre (CIP).

D. Central and Eastern Europe

31. Only one report covers implementation of the Convention in Central and Eastern Europe.

1. Consultative processes and partnership agreements

32. This report mentions one activity relating to partnership agreements: subregional efforts conducted by the Višegrad Group.

2. Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, bilaterally and multilaterally

33. The report mentions no activities in this area and provides no information on financial resources.

3. Other activities relevant to desertification control

34. There is no information on this matter.

III. GENERAL TRENDS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

A. Trends in consultative processes and partnership agreements

35. In their reports, the developed country Parties all reaffirmed, and for all regions, their fundamental support for consultative processes and partnership agreements. They support all efforts to promote decentralization and to strengthen the role of civil society, whether directly through activities specially geared towards this goal, or indirectly, by supporting development activities which have a popular participation component. It should be noted, however, that there are fewer such direct activities than indirect activities. One trend which can be observed in all regions is for the number of development activities by non-governmental organizations to increase, by comparison with the numbers listed in the reports submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its third and fourth sessions. This applies equally to the non-governmental organizations of developed countries and those of affected countries and demonstrates the priority given to promoting the role of civil society. These activities are coordinated by developed country embassies. Very little support is given to partnership agreements specifically related to the Convention.

36. Several countries point out that desertification processes are both global and local and this, in their view, justifies the conduct both of activities which are very localized and others very extensive in scope, at a subregional or even regional level. Partnership agreements are essential to ensure that these activities are conducted in the best possible conditions. Activities of the latter kind are conducted through the existing subregional and regional organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, thereby endorsing the important role of those organizations. Thus there is a discernable trend in all regions covered by the Convention towards greater solidarity and strengthened regional cooperation. This positive trend is supported by the embassies of developed countries in the effected countries and also through the provision of funding to regional technical and scientific centres. Besides these regional activities, two interregional activities are also mentioned in several reports: the Asia-Africa Forum and the indicators development project, implemented through cooperation between West African countries, OSS, China and the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

B. Trends in measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes, including financial measures

37. The developed country Parties confirm their fundamental interest in national, subregional and regional action programmes, with regard both to their preparation and to their implementation. The reports received contain very little evidence, however, in any of the regions, except for central and eastern Europe, of any direct support for these national,

subregional and regional programmes. The trend towards greater regional cooperation and solidarity among the different regions, referred to in the previous paragraph, does not necessarily mean that subregional and regional action programmes are already in operation.

38. As previously noted in their reports to the Conference of the Parties at its third and fourth sessions, some countries point to their role as lead countries. Developed countries provide updated information on bilateral cooperation procedures: all cooperation, in whatever area, must be triggered by a request from a competent authority of the requesting country. Certain countries point out that they have not received any request for the preparation of national action programmes. At the same time, it appears that national action programmes in all regions (except Central and Eastern Europe), and primarily in Africa, are indirectly supported through the involvement of developed countries in desertification control or rural development projects: the results of these projects thus also contribute to the preparation of national action programmes. None of the reports mention any field projects which have come about directly through the implementation of the national action programmes. The developed countries stress the need for national action programmes and desertification control to be closely linked with national development strategies and their resulting plans and programmes: the updates received show evidence of this trend, already noted in previous reports, for all the Convention regions.

C. Trends in other desertification control activities

39. As already noted in chapter II above, in the sections on Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, and in the reports submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its third and fourth sessions, the other desertification control-related activities fall into two main groups. The first includes activities in certain thematic areas, such as desertification monitoring, natural resources and their sustainable development. The second group covers activities designed to ensure the involvement of local populations in decision-making, to promote decentralization and the role of civil society and to foster the empowerment of certain groups, such as women, crop farmers and livestock breeders.

40. A slight difference can be observed between Africa and the other regions: in Africa, projects supported by developed countries tend to be integrated projects which combine thematic goals with the goals of popular participation. In the other regions, projects are more directly targeted towards certain thematic areas. In addition, there are several major priority areas common to all regions: water, erosion control and land degradation; improvement of crop-farming and stock-raising systems; plant cover and forests; agroforestry, particularly in Asia; and desertification monitoring. The reports make little mention of such macroeconomic goals as the stability of agricultural commodity prices or the development of economic activities other than crop-farming and stock-raising.

41. Mention should also be made of two other trends which are more clearly evident in the current reports than in those of previous sessions. The first relates to training activities, local and national capacity-building and the sharing of know-how and technology. The second relates to support for scientific research, in both developed and affected countries, in such areas as aspects of desertification and drought monitoring and the sustainable management of water, soil, plants and other natural resources. Some countries mention activities in sectors which have little relevance to desertification control, such as infrastructure and health.

D. Other trends

42. As for the support provided by developed countries for implementation of the Convention, it is evident from detailed accounts of the assistance rendered in the preparation of reports, the conduct of subregional meetings and the attendance by affected country Parties at meetings of Convention bodies (the Conference of the Parties, the Ad Hoc Working Group, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention) that this support is continuing.

43. Generally speaking, the countries give a full account of their internal workings and show how their cooperation is effected, who directs it and how it is coordinated between the various ministries and embassies. In addition, they specify which national bodies are the competent authorities in the area of desertification and identify their relevant scientific bodies and training institutions. There appears to be growing support for cooperative ventures led by non-governmental organizations. One country even reports that one of its non-governmental organizations is responsible for coordinating activities in support of implementation of the Convention. All the countries also list their cooperation priorities and stress the need for progress in human rights and ensuring equality between men and women.

44. All the countries repeat, but with added emphasis, their conviction stated in previous reports that, while desertification control may be a priority, it must also be integrated into national strategies which link together sustainable development, poverty control and desertification control.

45. A number of desertification control activities form part of multilateral corporation measures, including those conducted by United Nations organizations and programmes, by the CGIAR centres and by regional scientific and technical centres, including those in Africa. For the first time, mention is made of activities supported through the Global Mechanisms.

46. The financial resources allocated for the implementation of the Convention and for desertification control are reported in a very uneven manner and in a range of different currencies. Some reports specify the annual totals, including those for the years 2000 and 2001; others provide only combined totals spread over several years, while some give no figures at all. Notwithstanding such inconsistencies, it is clear that desertification control efforts are continuing at the same level and, for some developed countries, even increasing. The greatest priority is attached to such efforts in Africa, followed by Asia, then Latin America and the Caribbean. Finally, some countries are focusing their cooperation efforts on a small number of affected countries, while others are conducting simultaneous activities in a wide range of affected countries in all three regions. In general, there is very little information on support provided to Central and Eastern Europe.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

47. The conclusions which may be drawn from the reports received and the resulting recommendations are divided below into four sections, with a further section on issues relating to the Committee on Science and Technology.

A. Conclusions on the organization and approach of the reports

48. Most of the developed country reports arrived after the deadline for the submission of reports set by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth session. No reports were received by the time of preparing the present synthesis from some countries which had previously submitted reports for the third and fourth sessions. Some countries submitted reports for the third session, others for the fourth session and some for both. In addition, the countries submitting reports to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention were not necessarily the same as those which had previously submitted reports. Accordingly, it is very difficult to make any comparison over time of progress in the assistance provided to affected countries. The reports tend to be rather uneven in terms of their structure, content and financial information. The recommended structure is widely disregarded: only one report follows it closely while the others provide a general résumé which is laid out in the recommended manner but whose content does not follow the recommendations. The reports vary greatly in length, from 1 page to more than 40 pages. All these factors greatly complicated the synthesis exercise.

49. The developed countries all describe the modalities and aims of their cooperation. Some countries give considerable attention to their cooperation philosophy, strategy and policy, while others give detailed information on specific activities, both in the main text of the report and in annexes. These variations between the reports rendered it very difficult to synthesize them. In addition, the developed countries seemed to be at particular pains to explain why they were cooperating, why they were concerned about desertification and with whom they were cooperating. It was also difficult to single out activities directly related to implementation of the Convention from other desertification control activities.

50. Generally speaking, the reports are updates of previous reports and supplement the information that those already contained. In addition, three new reports have been submitted. In one case, the updated information has been gathered via a questionnaire circulated to the embassies of the countries concerned. Where regional priorities are concerned, 16 of the 17 reports deal with Africa, 13 with Asia, 8 with Latin America and the Caribbean and only 1 with Central and Eastern Europe.

B. Conclusions on the analysis of the consultative processes, partnerships, measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and other measures

51. The basic philosophy underlying cooperation between the developed countries and the affected countries is much the same in all the regions. The activities which they support tend to relate to the same issues and the only observable differences are due to their different biophysical circumstances. The African region appears to receive the greatest amount of support. Issues related to water resources are constantly growing in importance.

52. The reports demonstrate the considerable priority given to supporting consultative processes, even though relatively few projects are specifically designed to serve this purpose. A number of thematic projects have a popular participation component. The role of non-governmental organizations is clearly growing, particularly in measures to strengthen civil society and to boost the involvement of local populations in the taking of decisions on

desertification control projects which concern them directly. All the reports stress the need for partnerships in general, and there is increasing evidence of subregional solidarity, although not all the subregions in question have as yet adopted subregional action programmes.

53. In some developed countries there is evidence of increased efforts in the area of scientific research; these go hand-in-hand with corresponding coordination efforts within the country as well. There appears to be a serious need for a better understanding and better explanation of desertification in the context of increasing climate vulnerability and given the global nature of this process as one which ultimately concerns all countries, whether or not they are affected.

54. Certain countries draw attention to problems implementing the Convention and activities under the Convention. The first of these relates to internal coordination in certain affected countries, which is either inadequate or altogether lacking. Another derives from the excessively wide range of ministries involved (agriculture, rural development, livestock, water resources, forests, environment, planning, finance, foreign affairs, etc.). Other difficulties are encountered in the training of specialists and villagers, in dealing with land-tenure issues and in ensuring that the often precarious private sector remains dynamic.

C. Conclusions on synergies with other conventions and issues concerning the Committee on Science and Technology

55. Three reports refer to other environmental conventions and preparations for the Sustainable Development Summit in Johannesburg. These suggest two very interesting routes for the development of field projects, which take into account the goals of three conventions. The first such route is that of agroecology, designed to adapt locally cultivated plants to arid conditions and to halt the degradation of soils and loss of biological diversity by applying simple farming methods. The second route is to develop forestry both as a carbon sink and also to protect biological diversity and to safeguard the stability of the soil. These three reports state that field projects geared towards the objectives of the three conventions are already being implemented. A number of reports refer to GEF, regretting that the Facility does not provide much support for desertification-related projects.

56. The Committee on Science and Technology is only mentioned in two reports, in the context of work on indicators, both on the implementation of the Convention and on desertification evaluation and monitoring. The proposed indicators could be used to assist both affected countries and developed countries in preparing their future reports. There is only scant mention of work on traditional knowledge in the reports, with no reference to the Committee's recommendations. Finally, activities in support of early warning systems are mentioned in two reports, with relation to OSS and the AGRHYMET centre in Niamey.

D. Overall conclusions

57. The reports received give a reasonably good overview of the activities by developed countries to assist affected country Parties, thanks to the updated information which they contain. It is clear from the reports that efforts by developed countries to promote desertification control are continuing. These efforts should be anchored in broader strategic frameworks, such as the campaign against poverty, the promotion of sustainable development, and efforts to strengthen

the role of civil society and to foster decentralization. The level of financial support provided by developed countries and their extensive participation, together with that of the affected countries, in various meetings of the Convention bodies help enhance the standing of the Convention in the political dialogue between Parties. In addition, they give the Convention a comparative advantage, enabling it to create synergies, including between the three Rio conventions, in the sustainable management of the natural resources of the affected countries. At the same time, the reports give no clear indication of implementation modalities which would make it possible to commence the operational stage of the implementation of the Convention.

58. The important role allocated to scientific research in developed countries is rooted in the awareness that desertification, drought and their associated processes are global and transboundary phenomena. These phenomena necessitate better knowledge, closer monitoring and stronger subregional and regional efforts to ensure that they are viewed in a more harmonized way and to improve the methods employed to combat desertification. Generally speaking, however, not much information is provided on this issue.



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**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22,
PARAGRAPH 2 (A) AND (B), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION**

**REVIEW OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY RELEVANT ORGANS, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES OF
THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, AS WELL AS OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, ON THEIR ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE
PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES UNDER THE CONVENTION**

Note by the secretariat

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Introduction

1. By decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, the Conference of the Parties (COP), *inter alia*:

(a) Encouraged relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to provide information, as appropriate, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention.

(b) Requested the secretariat to compile the information provided by organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, on measures taken or planned in support of implementation of the Convention.

2. By decision 1/COP.5, the Conference of the Parties established the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention in the light of the experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, and to facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties pursuant to article 26 of the Convention.

3. The terms of reference of the CRIC state that the review process shall examine, *inter alia*, reports submitted by the Parties, information and advice from the Global Mechanism and the Committee on Science and Technology, as well as reports by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and such other reports as the Conference of the Parties may call for.

SYNTHESIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REPORTS

4. Pursuant to decisions 11/COP.1 and 1/COP.5, the secretariat sent reminders to organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and to accredited intergovernmental organizations, inviting them to submit their reports. Based on established practice, the secretariat requested non-governmental organizations to submit their contributions directly to their national focal points so as to ensure that the report would encompass civil society inputs in keeping with the "bottom-up" approach. Accordingly, most non-governmental organizations channelled their reports through their national focal points directly into their respective national reports. The following summaries have been prepared by the secretariat based on contributions received up to the time this report was finalized.

5. This report was prepared with inputs received from organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and from accredited intergovernmental organizations as of 24 May 2002. The secretariat endeavoured to take into consideration all the reports submitted under this agenda item. In doing so, the secretariat tried to accommodate, whenever possible, reports received after the established deadline of 30 April 2002. However, owing to serious time constraints relating to tight United Nations

editing and printing schedules, reports received after 24 May could not be considered for the purposes of this document. These reports will be posted on the secretariat web site and can be retrieved at <http://www.unccd.int>.

A. Organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system

Department of Public Information (DPI)

6. During the reporting period, the United Nations Radio covered the subject of desertification in its daily broadcasts and current affairs magazines for regional and worldwide dissemination. It provided extensive coverage, in various languages, of the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and of the World Day to Combat Desertification (17 June). It also produced eight radio magazines and programmes for future transmission on desertification and the UNCCD. The Video Section produced the *World Chronicle* programmes, and a total of 50 press releases and five press briefings were issued on desertification. The United Nations information centres, information services and offices also promoted UNCCD and its core topics through press briefings, TV interviews and conferences in Islamabad, Teheran and Ouagadougou. The United Nations Information Centre in Bonn translated into German several press releases and backgrounders relating to the work of the Convention's bodies.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

7. FAO's normative activities to combat desertification have focused on support to the UNCCD through the FAO interdepartmental working group. This *ad hoc* working group comprises representatives of 15 technical services with activities that are directly linked to the sustainable development of drylands. It has promoted the compilation of data and information provided by all FAO's services and, in turn, disseminated information on matters of relevance to the Convention and to desertification in general. It has also organized FAO representation at UNCCD meetings and organized partnerships with other UNCCD bodies and international institutions. FAO has set up a web site on desertification at <http://www.fao.org/desertification/>.

8. FAO has provided technical assistance to the thematic networks launched by the UNCCD secretariat in Africa and Asia. In Africa, FAO participated in the meeting to launch the Thematic Programme Network on Agroforestry and Soil Conservation (Lomé, Togo, June 2001); and in Asia, in the launching meetings of the Networks on Desertification Monitoring and Assessment, Agroforestry and Soil Conservation, and Rangeland Management and Sand Dune Fixation (Iran, May 2001).

9. In 2001, FAO established a web site on water harvesting training and is developing a programme aimed at promoting water harvesting in some sub-Saharan African countries.

10. In March and May 2001, FAO, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and other partners, organized two electronic

conferences on "Land and Agriculture" in order to catalyze stakeholders' involvement in the preparation of the World Food Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

11. FAO provided assistance to governments in formulating action programmes, policies and plans. In 2001, some 100 ongoing FAO field projects were directly related to the assessment and control of desertification. They covered a very wide range of activities, such as erosion control, improvement of water, forest and pasture management, local rural development through extension and participative approach programmes, assistance for the implementation of national information systems and statistics, and formulation of investment projects. FAO participated in the elaboration of national action programmes (NAPs) and subregional action programmes (SRAPs) in eight countries (China, Cuba, Haiti, Iran, Lebanon, Mali, Senegal and Yemen).

12. The FAO Investment Centre has formulated numerous investment projects for international and regional banks, with desertification control elements.

13. In the Near East and North Africa, FAO has implemented 100 projects and programmes, including regional projects, in more than 13 countries, relating to land and water management, sand dune stabilization, and integrated management of natural resources. The FAO Regional Office for the Near East organized five regional meetings relevant to desertification control in 2001 (Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt). In addition, FAO, in collaboration with the Emergency Centre for Locust Control Operation, created two bodies to control desert locusts and maintain vegetation in the region.

14. In sub-Saharan Africa, FAO has assisted almost all the countries with drylands or affected by desertification in controlling and reversing the degradation of soils or vegetation. FAO is involved in activities specifically related to combating desertification in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia and Uganda. These activities vary from direct support to a NAP, to the implementation of forest and rural programmes in dryland areas particularly affected by desertification.

15. FAO has developed a regional initiative for southern Africa based on an integrated approach to drought management.

16. FAO is implementing a regional programme initiated by the Government of Italy for the "Institutional Strengthening of Farmers' Association Networks in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal, in the Framework of Desertification Control and Poverty Alleviation".

17. In Senegal and Ethiopia, FAO has developed special food security programmes. In many other African countries, National Forest Programmes prepared by FAO are being revised to take better account of, and fit in with, the existing Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

18. The regional project "Sustainable Forest Management in African ACP countries" of FAO and the European Commission is contributing to improving data collection and forest information base management, mostly in the fields of wood energy and non-wood forest products, and supporting the country and subregional outlook analysis being carried out under the Forestry Outlook Study for Africa.
19. In East Africa, the project on land cover mapping based on satellite remote sensing aims to strengthen the capabilities of 12 East African countries in the sound planning and sustainable management of natural resources.
20. In Asia, 11 FAO projects in six countries were identified as being directly relevant to the UNCCD's objectives.
21. In collaboration with the India Institute of Forest Management, FAO organized a workshop in 2001 to discuss national-level criteria and indicators for sustainable management of dry forests in Asia. The workshop was attended by participants from nine countries with dry forests: Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The meeting agreed on a set of eight national-level criteria and 49 indicators for the sustainable management of dry forests in Asia.
22. In Iran, FAO prepared the National Report of the Interagency Mission on Desertification and took part in the regional workshop on capacity building for implementation of the UNCCD and in the International Workshop on New Technology to Combat Desertification in collaboration with the United Nations University.
23. FAO participated in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project to identify the root causes of desertification in China and provide a background analysis of desertification as an input to the formulation of the national action plan.
24. In the South Pacific island countries, a project was prepared to assess the magnitude of land degradation and its effects on people and food security, and an inventory of land resource information systems was compiled.
25. In Latin America, FAO participated in regional meetings organized by the secretariat of the UNCCD.
26. The Forestry Group of the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has been also cooperating with a regional study conducted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America to establish economic and social indicators for desertification.
27. The FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and UNEP have carried out a programme to implement desertification control activities in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Under this programme, national action programmes to combat desertification have been formulated in the six countries of the region with the largest arid and semi-arid zones and dry sub-humid areas.

28. FAO conducted a survey and made a compilation of UNCCD-related institutions and networks in all Latin American countries. A database was prepared of over 180 agencies and 600 people working in arid zone management, and another on appropriate technologies for the control of desertification. Regional training courses on desertification and sustainable development have been organized in Argentina, Chile and Mexico with the support of FAO and contributions from organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), UNDP and UNEP.

29. In 2001, there were 29 ongoing FAO field projects dealing with sustainable rural development in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid zones, preventing or rehabilitating land degradation.

30. As a general recommendation for future support to the UNCCD, FAO emphasizes the need for better rationalization of Convention activities at international, regional and national level through more dialogue and real partnership among key actors concerned with UNCCD-related activities.

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

31. IFAD's mandate as an international development and financial institution is to contribute to rural poverty alleviation in borrowing countries. It does so by providing loans and grants to help finance projects and programmes in the fields of agricultural and rural development, and natural resource management. Combating deforestation, soil degradation and desertification is central to this mandate.

32. In Latin America and the Caribbean, IFAD provides support through its project lending and Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) programmes: (a) to promote and consolidate beneficiary participation approaches, partnership development and local capacity building; (b) to mobilize resources with bilateral and multilateral organizations and the private sector; and (c) to evaluate progress and learning from experience while facilitating the dissemination and exchange of information. The report focuses on: (a) the ongoing project investment programme in arid/semi-arid zones; (b) the knowledge management and thematic networking activities undertaken under the regional TAG programme; and (c) the facilitating of support granted by the Fund in the formulation of regional and national action programmes, and related enabling and strategic activities. IFAD's current loan/project portfolio in the region comprises 51 loans/projects distributed throughout 24 countries and four geographic/economic subregions. The share of IFAD resources allocated to projects being implemented in arid and semi-arid zones amounts to US\$ 287.5 million or 45 per cent of total committed lending. There are various ongoing projects in the portfolio of the Latin American and Caribbean countries that aim explicitly at combating desertification (for example in Brazil, Haiti, Mexico and Venezuela).

33. IFAD's regional TAG programme comprises 13 programmes, financed by the same number of grants for a total of US\$ 10.7 million, at a total cost of US\$ 26.6 million. Thematically, the TAG programme involves partnerships in various areas, including, for example, training, technical assistance and

institutional strengthening for rural development, rural credit and micro-enterprise development, and internet-based thematic networking (the FIDAMERICA Network for Information Exchange). In Cuba and Haiti, IFAD has provided support for formulating national action programmes.

34. In Asia, IFAD has supported activities relating to national, subregional and regional action programmes (RAPs), in particular to establishing and developing thematic programme networks 1, 2 and 3. IFAD has also supported projects, for example in China, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, aiming, *inter alia*, at promoting self-help groups which employ locally sustainable technologies linking them to markets and bringing food security and food resilience to communities.

35. IFAD's loans for drylands investment projects are complemented by (a) IFAD grants, comprising TAGs for agricultural research to institutions of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), for instance the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT); (b) TAGs to non-CGIAR institutions; and (c) Extended Cooperation Programme (ECP) grants to NGOs. Other IFAD activities in support of the UNCCD include the Special Programme for Asian Upland Countries, launched in mid-1998 to improve the quality of economic growth for illiterate, ethnic and tribal people in poor health, residing in semi-arid, marginal, upland areas of Asia.

36. In 2001, IFAD signed a memorandum of understanding with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in order to facilitate identification and development of projects that address land degradation.

37. IFAD-supported activities in the Near East and North Africa relevant to UNCCD implementation include contributions to the elaboration by governments of national action programmes, both nationally and locally. IFAD is financing activities with a major natural resources conservation dimension in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Support has been extended to NGOs in the area. Most of the IFAD-financed TAGs in the Near East and North Africa are implemented in collaboration with research centres for research into arid and semi-arid lands, e.g. ICARDA, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD).

38. As of December 2001, IFAD had invested US\$ 980 million in 83 projects and mobilized US\$ 1,260 million in co-financing for these projects.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

39. The ILO's recent programme of support to cooperatives receiving aid from the World Food Programme in the Sahel subregion, known as ACOPAM, included various projects that addressed desertification. The ILO's extensive activities on employment, income generation and social protection might offer a useful framework for implementing UNCCD's mandate regarding the promotion and protection of sustainable livelihoods.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

40. The UNCTAD Secretariat was mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to prepare the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (UNLDC III), in 2001. This mandate included an assessment of the results of the Programme of Action for the Least Development Countries (LDCs) for the 1990s, including desertification-related topics. Within the UNLDC III participatory process, the UNCTAD Secretariat participated in the meetings of the special segment of the second, third and fourth sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD. Thus, UNCTAD took desertification-related topics into consideration in its analytical work, for example its Least Developed Countries Reports. Desertification was one of the elements of the "vulnerability profiles" prepared by the UNCTAD Secretariat for borderline countries for graduation from the list of LDCs. One of the elements of these profiles is vulnerability to natural disaster, which includes desertification. Many of the Least Developed Countries Reports prepared by the UNCTAD Secretariat in the 1990s, address the problems of combating desertification. These activities helped UNLDC III to assess the results of the Programme of Action for the LDCs in the 1990s in the area of protecting the environment against drought and desertification, and to formulate Commitment 6 of the Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2001-2010, on reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment.

41. The UNCTAD Secretariat also undertakes activities to promote organic agriculture, which would seem to bear on UNCCD's objectives and programmes.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

42. UNDP has taken several measures in support of UNCCD implementation. In terms of policy measures, UNDP has assisted 19 countries in Africa, seven in Asia and five in Latin America and the Caribbean to adopt or complete their national action programmes. UNDP country offices (27) have allocated resources within their country programmes to support the implementation of national action programmes. The UNDP country offices have incorporated support to implementation of the Convention into the Country Cooperation Framework (in total, 12 in Africa, seven in Asia, four in the Commonwealth of Independent States and four in Latin America and the Caribbean). UNDP has launched a process of mainstreaming the linkage between the UNCCD and poverty reduction strategies. Through the new integrated programme UNDP plans to help countries integrate NAPs into national economic frameworks and to move from strategy development to effective implementation of the Convention.

43. During 2001, UNDP strengthened its capacity to support drylands development by establishing a new Drylands Development Centre in Nairobi. This centre is integrated into UNDP's newly created network of Sub-Regional Resource Facilities (SURF). It has helped 16 countries to develop an integrated programme for drylands development (Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe).

44. In February 2002 UNDP held a technical workshop that brought together participants from 19 affected countries, donors, subregional organizations, civil society organizations, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, United Nations agencies and regional organizations. During the workshop partners provided feedback on, and assessed the new Integrated Drylands Development Programme.

45. UNDP has provided financial assistance to help Mauritania (US\$ 132,000), Cameroon (US\$ 50,000), Togo (US\$ 50,000) and Cape Verde (US\$ 775,000) to elaborate and/or implement their NAPs.

46. Support for the preparation of the subregional action programme is provided in close cooperation with the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). Thematic programme documents were prepared in the different areas (protection of crops, early warning systems, sustainable management of transboundary plant and animal resources, rational development and management of energy resources, improvement and development of cross-border ecosystems). The Drylands Development Centre is working with CILSS, providing technical backstopping and financial support (US\$ 10,000) for developing a subregional framework on local governance to guide the implementation of NAPs and the SRAP.

47. In West Africa, UNDP is helping to integrate environmental and dryland topics into national development strategies (Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania). This has enabled governments to fully integrate dryland issues into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). With Danish support, a training project for West Africa has been set up to facilitate access to appropriate knowledge and expertise in desertification and drought monitoring assessment.

48. In East and Southern Africa, UNDP has been supporting the NAP process by providing strategic policy advice and technical and capacity-building support, at country and subregional level, for resource mobilization to build the knowledge base and disseminate knowledge on drylands. Ten countries have now adopted or completed their NAPs with UNDP support.

49. UNDP facilitated and coordinated a partnership- and capacity-building workshop in Kampala (10-14 December 2001) to support implementation of the Convention in the subregion of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

50. In Arab States, UNDP is assisting Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Syria Arab Republic and Yemen to implement the Convention with funding from the Government of Finland. A fund of US\$ 600,000 is being channelled into projects and programmes.

51. At the regional level, UNDP initiated support to the SRAP process in West Asia in mid-2001.

52. UNDP has supported cross-cutting programmes to establish synergies with other conventions and initiatives for mitigating the effects of drought and climate change. The UNDP/GEF-funded project will focus on the interface

between three conventions, the UNCCD, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

53. In several countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP has helped governments integrate the Convention's objectives into their programmes.

54. In addition to its core resources, UNDP operates through a range of other funds and special programmes: GEF, GEF Small Grants Programme, Capacity 21 programmes, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the Africa 2000 Initiative and the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. In supporting UNCCD implementation, UNDP is collaborating with institutions such as UNEP, FAO, the World Bank, the Global Mechanism, the GEF secretariat, and national and international non-governmental organizations.

55. The Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries has supported a number of activities which promote implementation of the Convention, including funding an operational follow-up to the second Africa-Latin America and the Caribbean meeting.

56. Greater awareness has been built on mainstreaming, particularly the linkage between the UNCCD and poverty reduction strategies. UNDP support measures have helped establish a good foundation for many of the countries to launch their NAP process.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

57. UNEP has supported implementation of the Convention by assisting countries to develop and implement projects funded by the GEF. In a global context, UNEP has implemented the identification phase of the survey and evaluation of networks, institutions, agencies and bodies relevant to implementation of the Convention. A web site database of institutions, agencies and organizations has been established containing 1,060 entries. The second phase of this survey is in planning. It concerns evaluation of UNCCD-relevant parties in southern Africa, and maintenance and further development of the database.

58. At the regional level, UNEP has helped countries and their regional and subregional organizations to develop and set up UNCCD regional coordination units in Africa, Asia and Latin America and to formulate subregional action programmes.

59. At the national level, UNEP has supported implementation of the Convention in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

60. Since 2000, UNEP has been developing an internet-accessible database on success stories and best practices for dissemination and knowledge sharing.

61. UNEP has launched a Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) project, in close collaboration with FAO and the UNCCD secretariat, to

provide a policy tool for the implementation of national action programmes and subregional action programmes under the Convention.

62. UNEP also facilitates closer links between land degradation and climate change. In 2001 it convened an international workshop on "Policy Related to Land and Climate Change" to evaluate existing science and policy strategies addressing the land-climate linkage.

63. In Africa, within the framework of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment, UNEP has assisted African country Parties in preparing their reports to the UNCCD. UNEP has also assisted the UNCCD process by promoting awareness of approaches to mobilizing financial resources for the implementation of the Convention in the IGAD and Southern African Development Community (SADC) subregions of Africa.

64. Within the framework of the GEF, UNEP together with UNDP and the World Bank, are partners in a special Africa Land and Water Initiative. This initiative will address the global environmental problems associated with land degradation and the management of transboundary waters in Africa, in order to promote sustainable development and food security on the continent.

65. UNEP is supporting projects in transboundary semi-arid and arid ecosystems in West, East and southern Africa and the Horn of Africa that promote regional cooperation and coordination of activities across political and sectoral boundaries in spatially and temporally variable environments (Mauritania, Mozambique, North-Eastern Ethiopia and South-Western Djibouti, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

66. UNEP also undertook the Management of Shared Water Resources Programme. It includes projects which contribute to implementation of the subregional action programme in West Africa and its thematic network on sustainable management of shared water resources, and a project on management of the North-Western Sahara Aquifer (Fouta Djallon Highlands, Niger and Nigeria, Volta River Basin).

67. In the area of environmental emergencies, UNEP is collaborating with United Nations Habitat and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on developing emergency response to floods in southern Africa. The project is under preparation.

68. UNEP is involved in the development and implementation of the environmental component of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). UNEP is assisting African countries to prepare and adopt an environmental action plan based on NEPAD's Environment Initiative, which has identified combating desertification as one of eight areas of intervention.

69. UNEP is implementing a project on Biodiversity Conservation and Renewable Energy Technologies in West Africa. This project started in November 2001 and will run until late 2003. It aims at empowering communities in four main areas of the Lake Chad basin (Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria) in West Africa to participate effectively in sustainable development.

70. The UNEP Regional Office for Africa participated in the ceremony to mark World Day to Combat Desertification in Kenya; the meeting to launch UNCCD's Thematic Network for the Promotion of Rational Use of Rangelands and Development of Fodder Crops, in the context of the African regional action programme to combat desertification, held in Maseru, Lesotho; and the fifth Regional Conference in preparation for the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD, held in Maputo, Mozambique.

71. In Asia, the Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) has been engaged in the preparation of the West Asian subregional action programme since 1995. It has drawn up a subregional action programme to combat desertification through a consensus building process. UNEP/ROWA helped to draw up the regional programmes to combat desertification and assisted countries in the West Asia region to prepare national action plans. The assistance included: an awareness raising forum in Bahrain; consultations on programme matters with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Syrian Arab Republic and Sultanate of Oman; a workshop in 2001 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to assist member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the preparation of NAPs; preparation of guidelines for developing NAPs; organization of a focal point meeting in the Arab states in 2001 in Salalah, Oman, on preparing and implementing NAPs and SRAPs; and support to Kuwait, UAE and Palestine in preparing their national reports.

72. In the Asia-Pacific region, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP/ROAP) has been engaged in various activities: participation in the seventh meeting of Senior Officials on the North-East Asian subregional programme of environmental cooperation, which took place in Beijing from 25 to 27 July 2001; support for participation by UNCCD country Parties in the third Asia-Africa Forum on Combating Desertification, 21-25 June 2001, in Ulanbator, Mongolia; technical and financial support to preparation of the UNCCD publication entitled "Global Alarm: Dust and Sandstorms from the World's Drylands".

73. In Europe and Central Asia, national action programmes for Uzbekistan and Armenia were developed with financial and technical assistance from UNEP. UNEP supported awareness-raising activities to promote ratification of the UNCCD by the Russian Federation. In cooperation with Russian national institutions, UNEP produced some publications on desertification issues and disseminated them in CIS countries.

74. In Latin America and the Caribbean, with the support of the Government of Mexico, the UNCCD regional coordinating unit (RCU) was established under an agreement between the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP/ROLAC) and the Government of Mexico.

75. UNEP is supporting a project on the harmonization of policies. This project aims to carry out a set of policy reforms at national level in order to bring policy instruments into line with the needs of rural development, and improve their impact on land degradation and land conservation. The RCU coordinated the initial project activities, including important negotiations with participating countries (Barbados, Chile, Dominican Republic, Mexico,

Nicaragua and Peru). UNEP/ROLAC attended a large number of meetings in the region on behalf of UNEP. UNEP also provided technical and financial assistance to help countries prepare their national reports on implementation of the Convention.

76. In Latin America, UNEP/GEF contributed US\$ 750,000 towards the establishment of an Indicator Model for Dryland Ecosystems; and in the Caribbean, US\$ 25,000 to the Conservation of Biodiversity and Prevention of Land Degradation in Small Island Ecosystems.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

77. UNESCO's activities to assist desertification-affected countries are carried out in its fields of competence, especially science and education. UNESCO promotes education at all levels and the dissemination of information on rational natural resource use based on sound scientific research, as key elements in combating desertification.

78. In the field of education, UNESCO, in close collaboration with the UNCCD secretariat, has produced an *Educational Kit on Desertification*, which was launched on the occasion of the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD. This educational kit is targeted at primary schools in desertification-affected countries and is based on real-life situations drawing on the experience of desertification-affected country Parties worldwide. UNCCD national focal points and NGOs working to combat desertification were invited to submit case studies highlighting the causes and consequences of desertification, and successful techniques for combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The kit comprises a series of 12 case studies and a teacher's guide with information on the problems of desertification and drought, and on the UNCCD. A wall chart for use in classrooms, entitled "Desertification in the World", completes the kit. The kits have been produced in four languages and are currently being tested in 18 desertification-affected countries through the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network.

79. In the area of science, UNESCO promotes capacity building in countries affected by desertification. Two UNESCO university chairs on desertification have been created (in Jordan and Sudan). The establishment of additional university chairs is under consideration.

80. UNESCO, through its Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme, puts specific emphasis on *in situ* conservation of drylands and on the ecosystem approach as developed by the Convention on Biological Diversity. An international UNESCO-MAB workshop on "Desertification: Rehabilitation of Degraded Drylands and Biosphere Reserves" was organized in collaboration with ICARDA and the United Nations University (UNU), with the participation of experts from Northern Africa, Asia and Europe.

81. UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) for the sustainable use of freshwater resources addresses the problem of water management in drylands. Traditional means of water retention and harvesting, and other forms of traditional knowledge and practices to combat desertification are

being addressed by several of UNESCO's scientific programmes, in particular the IHP, the MAB programme and the Management of Social Transformations programme (MOST). It is expected that the results will be of direct benefit to desertification and drought-affected countries.

82. Traditional knowledge and practices to combat desertification have been addressed by several UNESCO scientific programmes. UNESCO is also associated with the programme aimed at establishing the International Research Centre on Traditional Knowledge, in Matera, Italy.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

83. As many refugee camps and settlements are in arid lands, UNHCR is seeking to reduce the impact of refugee and related operations on those fragile ecosystems. Key activities being undertaken to address such impacts include the introduction of improved agricultural techniques and practices, reforestation (including agroforestry) and improved management of existing forests and woodlands, water management and harvesting practices, and the promotion of fuel-efficient stoves and improved livestock management. All the above-mentioned activities are carefully managed through an active programme of environmental awareness-raising and environmental education.

84. The environmental management programmes of the UNHCR are designed to: (a) prevent environmental degradation from taking place; (b) help identify and put in place appropriate methods and practices that promote and enable the sound use of natural resources in refugee camps and settlements; (c) and restore natural resources and ecosystems where they have been impaired. Dryland countries currently benefiting from such interventions include Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan.

85. In addition to a broad range of practical interventions that benefit refugees as well as local communities, UNHCR is aware that decisions taken at the political level are also important when it comes to environmental management, especially in dry and arid regions. For this reason, UNHCR works closely with national and local authorities to find practical and appropriate responses to environmental issues.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

86. UNIDO has developed an initiative on land degradation (desertification and deforestation) in the African sub-Saharan zone (Chad, Mali, Niger and Sudan).

87. UNIDO has set two thematic topics for implementation of the UNCCD:

- measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems to mitigate the effects of drought;
- linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and with national development strategies.

88. Informal discussions were held with the UNCCD Facilitation Committee, with IFAD and with the Officer for Africa of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the GEF, on the research component of the project. The World Bank's GEF Task Officers and the GEF Biodiversity/Land Degradation Officer were briefed on this project. Accordingly, UNIDO is preparing a project concept under the new forthcoming GEF land degradation focal area, for inclusion in the GEF pipeline and informal circulation to the partners in the four participating countries for their views and comments.

89. UNIDO has developed a new concept for the "Control of land degradation, the way ahead for sustainable rural development", which is intended to contribute to national and international initiatives on reversing current trends in land degradation.

90. Finally, all the activities which concern the promotion of bamboo in UNIDO's various integrated programmes (Cuba, Ghana, India) are related to the prevention of deforestation and therefore beneficial to all projects aiming at combating desertification.

World Bank

91. In addition to regular lending and non-lending operations, the World Bank's efforts to support measures aimed at UNCCD implementation have focused on harnessing and disseminating best practices in sustainable land management in South-South exchanges. In this context, the World Bank launched the *Brazil Sustainable Land Management Study Tours* in 1998 to demonstrate the role and impact of the no-tillage system approach in sustainable land management, the process of adoption by Brazilian farmers' organizations, different strategies of technology generation and its dissemination, including the social, environmental, organizational, institutional and policy aspects, with emphasis on smallholder agriculture.

92. The popularity of this programme is growing. So far, 109 participants from 16 African countries, from Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia, international organizations, private and non-profit-oriented organizations have taken part. In addition to building capacity, these study tours aim to help participants develop national action plans and promote the no-tillage farming systems approach appropriate to local and national circumstances. In June 2000, the World Bank produced and disseminated a video in several languages presenting no-tillage farming in Brazil.

93. In 1996, the World Bank launched a *Soil Fertility Initiative (SFI)*. The SFI is an instrument to strengthen collaborative action between international organizations and governments in order to give greater impetus to activities that focus on soil fertility in Africa. The goal of the SFI is to reverse soil degradation, re-capitalize soils fertility and enhance land productivity so as to alleviate rural poverty and improve natural resource management. Under the SFI, targeted soil fertility national action plans are at various stages of preparation and or piloting in 25 countries. In at least six countries (Guinea, Kenya, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal and Zambia) several components of the SFI programme are being implemented through ongoing projects supported by the World Bank and the GEF.

94. For the period 2002-2003, the World Bank has earmarked US\$ 3.75 million in grant resources for the Global Mechanism, for the elaboration and implementation of national action programmes to combat desertification. The grant is intended to support the efforts of affected countries in implementing the UNCCD over a period of three years. In particular, the grant is expected to help establish a favourable environment for the participation of civil society and the private sector in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought, and for helping mobilize additional resources to implement the UNCCD.

World Food Programme (WFP)

95. The WFP implements development and recovery activities to strengthen food security for, and the livelihoods of, poor people living on land subject to drought and desertification. The report highlights the activities undertaken in 2001 in 19 countries. It focuses on activities supported through WFP's development programmes. Similar activities are frequently supported through food-for-work, as a component of WFP's Emergency Operations and Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations.

96. In Africa (Benin, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sudan and Tanzania) WFP has supported multi-purpose rural development activities. It has assisted food-insecure people to upgrade their natural resources and create cereal stocks. It has supported activities for soil and water conservation, and construction of rural infrastructure. In addition, the Organization has supported the "fund of food commodities" programme, which is used to develop disaster preparedness plans. It has also helped poor households to rehabilitate degraded catchments through soil and water conservation, create and/or rehabilitate small-scale irrigation schemes and establish community forest and fuel-wood and fruit-tree plantations.

97. Food-for-work is provided in many countries for participation in agricultural production, environmental protection and training. WFP-supported activities aim to expand agro-pastoral areas through land recovery, water management and increased water availability for cropping. In other areas, WFP supports UNDP's activities for creating cereal banks. In Senegal, WFP has assisted people in creating assets, in both agriculture and forestry, to protect natural resources, mitigate the effects of erosion and increase available water supply. In Sudan, WFP has supported the construction of small dams and wells, through food-for-work. WFP has also provided technical assistance to upgrade government expertise in vulnerability and food security analysis, for use in disaster mitigation and early warning.

98. In the Middle East, Central Asia and the Mediterranean, WFP has supported the settlement of marginalized communities living in deserts and the settlement of people on newly irrigated lands (Egypt). WFP has also begun to explore the use of remote sensing techniques to assess the environmental impact of activities and to monitor crop productivity. WFP has assisted poor farmers in Jordan systematically to adopt sustainable natural resource management practices. In Syria, WFP data and information (e.g. on

land quality, land access and estimated irrigated area per capita) were collected and entered into a computer system as part of a vulnerability analysis and mapping exercise. WFP also conducted a drought risk analysis for Syria. WFP has been involved, and will play an important role, in the process of formulating a national drought strategy for Syria.

99. In Latin America and the Caribbean (Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua), WFP has supported the "Creation of assets to cope with natural disaster-related vulnerability" programme to help communities better cope with the effects of natural disasters. It has provided technical support and training in soil conservation and food production methods, and income-generating activities. The Organization has also assisted people in affected areas by means of activities designed to reduce their vulnerability to these crises, encouraging them to adopt soil and water conservation practices on their farms and invest in irrigation.

World Health Organization (WHO)

100. WHO addressed global environmental change issues, of which desertification was one. From a health perspective, there are many indirect consequences of desertification which are relevant to WHO's work. WHO established potential links between desertification and cardio-respiratory diseases, vector-borne diseases, water- and food-borne diseases, malnutrition, psychosocial consequences and other related morbidity and mortality.

101. WHO has joined the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which will provide input to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention to Combat Desertification.

102. Finally, WHO identified three projects as being relevant to desertification-health links. They address air pollution from wind erosion, air pollution from forest and bush burning, and forest fires. The Organization assisted national and international authorities in capacity building to implement clean air implementation plans.

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

103. The World Meteorological Organization has participated actively in implementation of the UNCCD in a number of ways. WMO supported several scientific programmes including the Agricultural Meteorological Programme, Climate Information and Prediction Services (CLIPS), the Hydrology and Water Resources Programme and the Technical Cooperation Programme.

104. WMO continues to involve national meteorological and hydrological services and regional and subregional meteorological centres in the improvement of hydrological and meteorological networks and strategies for systematic observation, exchange and analysis of data, and monitoring of droughts; in assisting in the transfer of knowledge and technology; and in strengthening and intensifying research on the interactions between climate, the hydrological regime and desertification.

105. WMO has undertaken seminars and workshops on topics relevant to desertification: eight training seminars and workshops and 30 forums have been held throughout Africa, South and Central America and the Caribbean and in Asia. These seminars aimed to come up with an integrated approach to the prevention and mitigation of environmental disasters. WMO also participated in several meetings concerned with UNCCD implementation in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

106. In addition, WMO organized or co-sponsored a number of activities in support of implementation of the UNCCD in Africa through assistance to drought-monitoring centres.

107. WMO provided financial support for the preparation of national reports by affected Parties in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe. WMO also contributed to capacity-building initiatives for the development of national action programmes and to information and awareness-raising efforts through its own publications, and by supporting the reproduction of UNCCD information documentation.

World Tourism Organization (WTO)

108. Tourism is a sector that is affected by desertification. If developed in a sustainable manner and on a significant scale, it can provide an alternative to economic activities which contribute to accelerating desertification, such as cattle raising and logging. WTO has devoted some effort to defining guidelines for the sustainable development and management of tourism in desert areas. It plans to undertake research on climate change and tourism, in which context the subject of desertification could be dealt with further.

B. Intergovernmental organizations

Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)

109. ACSAD is a specialized organization working within the framework of the League of Arab States with the aim of harmonizing efforts to develop scientific agricultural research in arid and semi-arid areas. ACSAD helps in the exchange of information and experience and promotes modern agricultural techniques to increase agricultural production in 22 Arab countries.

110. ACSAD has undertaken activities in North African member countries of the Arab League to support implementation of the UNCCD. Together with agricultural research centres in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, ACSAD launched a project with local communities on the use of marginal water for irrigation. ACSAD also carried out a survey on the status of vegetation cover in North Eastern Libya.

111. ACSAD has established the Arab Database for Arid Plants (ADAP) to help manage and select suitable species to rehabilitate degraded land. ACSAD conducted a study on the status of desertification and ways to combat desertification in the Arab states. A summary of each country profile will be presented during the CRIC meeting in November 2002.

112. In West Asia, ACSAD carried out various activities in Syria (rehabilitation of Syrian Steppe), Jordan (wind erosion control and sand dune fixation) and Lebanon (Balabak and Hermel project). Additionally, ACSAD contributed to implementation of the subregional action programme for West Asia. ACSAD has been assigned to implement two networks dealing with water resources management for agriculture in arid, semi- and sub-humid areas in West Asia. In this framework, ACSAD prepared an inventory study survey on the vegetation cover.

113. ACSAD participated in a workshop on capacity building for West Asia stakeholders.

African Development Bank (AfDB)

114. The Bank has been playing an active role in the implementation of the Convention, particularly in the context of its efforts to reduce poverty in Africa, promote sustainable development and regenerate the environment in the drylands. In this context, the Bank is active as a member of the Facilitation Committee set up to provide support and advice to the Global Mechanism on how to develop its operations and scope.

115. In addition, it continued to commit substantial resources to projects and programmes that address the problem of desertification. It is addressing, through bank-financed projects, some key sectors, like livestock management, protection of forests and natural habitats, and preservation of biodiversity, by mainstreaming into the project cycle such core issues as land tenure, greater participation by NGOs and women, access to credit, markets, and health and educational facilities. Furthermore, the Bank is building and reinforcing partnerships with ongoing programmes to co-manage and co-finance projects aimed at combating desertification.

116. The Bank houses UNCCD's RCU for Africa. The RCU and the African Development Bank plan jointly to undertake activities that reflect their comparative advantages: integrated management of water resources of transboundary rivers, agro-forestry and soil conservation, and other planned thematic programme networks.

African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing (AOCRS)

117. AOCRS is the institutional focal point of the network on ecological monitoring, remote sensing, natural resources mapping and early warning systems for Africa. AOCRS launched a web site and drew up two reports relating to the network. The reports laid down guidelines for the fourth thematic programme network (TPN4), and identified concrete methods for its implementation.

118. AOCRS participated in the technical meeting on the establishment and implementation of a system of information exchange and dissemination relating to the African regional action programme. During this meeting, AOCRS made a presentation on the structure of the network and the design of its web site.

*Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe
(CEDARE)*

119. In support of UNCCD implementation, CEDARE organized regional workshops and training courses: the International Meeting on Man and the Environment (Oman, September 2001) and the Regional Meeting on the Status of Desertification in the Arab Region (Oman, 3-5 September 2001).

120. CEDARE took over the follow-up on the programme for application of SOTER (Soil and Terrain Database) in three Arab countries: Egypt, Lebanon and Syrian Arab Republic. The organization also conducted the study and preparation for the final report on the state of the environment in Arab countries. This report presents a regional perspective on the environment, developmental activities and environmental policies.

121. CEDARE organized regional coordination for establishing a regional system of exchange of information on desertification in the Arab region.

European Community (EC)

122. During the reporting period, January 2000 - December 2001, the European Community has consistently promoted actions to address desertification at the local, national, regional and international levels.

123. The report describes the main policy frameworks, corresponding to different geographical regions, governing the activities of the Community in developing countries. These include actions supported under the European Development Fund (EDF) in the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP), the Mediterranean Partnership, the funds for Asia and Latin America, those for Eastern European and Central Asian countries and thematic budget lines such as the one on the environment and tropical forests in developing countries.

124. The Community funded projects relevant to land degradation and desertification in all regions in which it is active, including the promotion of forestry measures to prevent dune encroachment on desert margins, the development of smallholder agricultural production through support for irrigation and land reclamation, integrated rural livelihood and environmental development programmes, water resource management, decentralized cooperation for rural development and a range of measures to promote food security.

125. In ACP countries, environmental work has been very intensive in the fields of conservation and wildlife, forestry and sustainable management of natural resources, with the implementation of seven new programmes and projects for a global amount of € 55.1 million, and with the approval of four new programmes totalling € 26 million. Furthermore, the EC has supported regional institutions such as the CILSS, the IGAD and the SADC in the context of UNCCD implementation.

126. In Mediterranean countries, the EC approved two projects in the category "combating desertification" with a contribution of € 4.5 million. In addition, the European Union's main financial instrument supporting its environmental policy (LIFE) financed two projects relating to desertification in the Mediterranean region with a Community contribution of € 0.6 million.

127. In Asia, the Community provided support to the environment sector with substantial programmes of forest protection (Indonesia and Philippines), biodiversity and environmental technology.

128. In Central and Eastern Europe, the Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD), with an annual envelope of € 0.52 billion, should be cited as being of relevance to the UNCCD.

129. In addition, the EC provided support under the various research programmes within the Community's Fifth Framework Research Programme to various activities beneficial to implementation of the Convention.

130. The Community has contributed to the CRIC process by tackling some fundamental cross-cutting themes identified by the last Conference of the Parties as being crucial to improve implementation of the Convention. These concern subjects such as the participatory process, involvement of civil society, land tenure and synergies among multilateral environmental agreements.

Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)

131. The IADB has been disseminating the mandates and principles of the UNCCD and providing technical support to the countries of the region in support of preparation of the national action programmes and organization of the different regional meetings. The IADB has also provided financial and technical support to member States for implementation of projects aiming at improving land management and the income and life quality of affected populations.

132. Since 1996, the IADB has participated in the regional meetings of the Latin America and Caribbean region, providing technical assistance to prepare documents relevant to the region. In this regard, financial support was provided to the fourth regional meeting, while both technical and financial support were made available for the organization of the fifth regional meeting and to prepare documents on the integrated management of local governments, and on agroforestry. For the sixth regional meeting, assistance was provided for the preparation of a scientific and technical report on land degradation in the region, especially Central America.

133. As part of implementation of the Convention in the region, the IADB provided financial and technical assistance to the development of a number of activities and projects. This assistance was used, *inter alia*, for preparing the Latin American workshop on desertification (1994, Fortaleza, Brazil), organizing an international course on desertification and development in Latin America and the Caribbean (1997, La Serena, Chile) and for preparing national action programmes to combat desertification in Central

America. Technical assistance was also extended to experts and technicians working in national focal point institute in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru, with the aim of establishing methodologies for preparing NAPs and disseminating the principles and mandates of the UNCCD.

134. The IADB is preparing a regional technical cooperation programme, for US\$ 1,090,000 which at the request of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Peru, will be allocated to combat desertification in South America. The aim of this cooperation will be institution building, and capacity building for the different actors and decision-makers.

135. The IADB considers that governments must have the political will to provide internal and external financial resources to implement policies and activities aiming at the sustainable development of arid lands. Revision and harmonization of national and sectoral policies and strengthening of the national focal points are also necessary. Furthermore, governments should promote the creation of an enabling framework by means of priority strategies that give due attention to the causal factors of land degradation and promote participation at all levels. The IADB also believes that technical and financial assistance should be used at the local level to develop effective and simple early warning systems to prevent and mitigate the effects of desertification and drought. Furthermore, better resource management by the different actors is vital to reducing poverty and promoting social equity in arid lands.

136. At the regional level, the IADB considers it important to develop regional activities aimed at the exchange of knowledge and experience of successful policies. Efforts at the regional level should take advantage of the technical and financial support made available by the IADB and the Interagency Group for Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), IFAD, FAO, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)).

International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)

137. ICARDA has attended sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD and meetings of the Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism. It also participated in the joint CBD-UNCCD work programme on Biological Diversity of Drylands. Several meetings were held with country representatives to discuss ICARDA's contribution to both the preparations for and implementation of the NAPs. Other meetings were held following on action taken by ICARDA towards implementation of the SRAPs for West Asia and North Africa. ICARDA has contributed to the debate on preparation of NAPs in West Asian and North African country Parties.

138. ICARDA has developed a conceptual framework for achieving complementarity between the regional and subregional networks on water management, and a proposal for initial activities in the thematic network on water management (TN1) of the West Asian SRAP and the Asian RAP.

139. In West Asia, ICARDA and ACSAD have started to implement TN1. Two major activities are under way, the Inventory Studies on Water Resources in West Asia (TN2) and the Pilot Areas Project. A document presenting a framework for the selection of representative pilot project sites in the various countries involved in the West Asian SRAP has been finalized.

140. ICARDA has proposed a framework for the TN1 network on water resources for the West Asia SRAP. A database has been developed at ICARDA. Data will be entered, managed, analysed and made accessible to partners.

141. ICARDA participated in the Asia thematic programme network on rangeland and sand dune fixation (TPN3), held in Iran, from 7 to 9 May 2001.

142. An agreement was signed between ICARDA and UNEP/ROWA in August 2001 on implementation of an inventory and regional database on sustainable water management in West Asia, as part of the West Asian SRAP.

143. ICARDA is a member of the Steering Committee of the thematic programme network for water management in Asia (TPN4), led by Syrian Arab Republic, and is assisting the Syrian Arab Republic with the launch of the TPN4 in Asia. ICARDA participated in the meeting to launch a regional thematic programme network (TPN3) on the promotion of the rational use of rangelands and development of fodder crops, in the context of the RAP in Africa.

144. In West Asia and North Africa, ICARDA participated in two UNCCD events in Mongolia (the third Asia-Africa Forum on Combating Desertification and the fourth regional meeting of UNCCD focal points). ICARDA participated in the Arab Region Meeting for the Preparation and Implementation of National and Subregional Action Programmes to Combat Desertification in West Asia and North Africa.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

145. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD is currently working to formulate policy guidance on how to mainstream global environmental issues, notably desertification, in development cooperation. The DAC, in collaboration with the OECD Environment Directorate, is identifying linkages between climate change and central socioeconomic priorities such as combating land degradation and desertification. The DAC is also working to improve statistical reporting of aid to the UNCCD.

The Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)

146. In accordance with its institutional mandate, the OSS has supported countries of the African region in the monitoring of desertification, the evaluation of action programmes to combat desertification and the reinforcement of mechanisms to disseminate information on desertification and sustainable management of natural resources.

147. In 2001, the OSS helped to strengthen national capacities for monitoring desertification, under its Long Term Ecological Monitoring Observatories Network (ROSELT/OSS) and Satellite Images for Meteorology, Agrometeorology and Environment Management in the Saharan-Sahelian Zone (IMAGES) programmes. Also under the ROSELT programme, it assisted 12 pilot observatories to harmonize the measurement protocols and mechanisms used to disseminate the information obtained. In 2001, the programme established a scientific and technical committee, and framework agreements were signed with several observatories in the region.

148. In the scientific and technical field, the OSS has carried out the following activities:

- Setting up of a web site for the ROSELT programme;
- Preparing a database on the observatories;
- Verifying and editing the information obtained by the El Ommayyed Observatory (Egypt);
- Organizing two workshops on methodology to monitor vegetation.

149. The IMAGES programme plans to use satellite imagery for meteorology, agro-meteorology and environment management in the Saharan-Sahelian zone. Under this programme, the OSS, in collaboration with Morocco and Tunisia and under the sponsorship of the EC, is planning a technical assistance project to develop operational applications. The objective of this project is to assist in decision-making on critical issues such as food security, management of natural resources and environmental monitoring.

150. The OSS has promoted cooperation among its member States in the sustainable management of common natural resources, in particular within the NWSAS (North-Western Sahara Aquifer System) programme which involved Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. The OSS also promoted the System for the Circulation of Information on Desertification/Environmental Information and Monitoring System on the Internet (SID/SISEI) programme.

151. In accordance with decision 11/COP.4, the OSS, in collaboration with CILSS presented to the Committee on Science and Technology a technical report on field experience of monitoring and evaluation of the NAPs of African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean countries.

152. In accordance with decision 11/COP.5, the OSS drew up a programme for training trainers, which was offered to focal points and teams in charge of the follow-up and evaluation of the action programmes.

West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)

153. The Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union has participated actively in implementation of the Convention through its own activities, within the framework of the SRAP in West Africa and in Chad. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) drew up an action programme with eight components (combating desertification, conservation of biodiversity, combating coastal erosion, management of pollution, and improvement of living conditions, management of transboundary ecosystems,

management of hydric resources, promotion of renewable energies, capacity building). The Commission participated, in collaboration with ECOWAS, CILSS and the secretariat of the UNCCD, in the development of the subregional action programme. It supported land management in the framework of special funds earmarked for affected areas.

154. For 2002, the Commission plans to finance national workshops and meetings of experts and ministers responsible for the environment. The Commission collaborated with the CILSS and the UNCCD secretariat in the preparation of transboundary projects to combat desertification in ECOWAS countries: the Beli project (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger), the Kantchari project (Niger, Burkina Faso) and the Azawak project (Mali, Niger).

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